‘Kujira’ developing into a ‘whale’ of a typhoon

Story below, Col. 1

Brain drain up again but gov’t not worried

O SIGE, MAGSI-ALIS KAYO!

FILIPINO professionals are streaming out for greener pastures abroad, but officials say the exodus has not reached crisis levels and can be harnessed to the nation’s advantage.

Working overseas has

BRAIN/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

NO INQUIRER
on Good Friday
and Black Saturday

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Thursday, April 17, 2003 ★★★ 34 pages / 3 sections / vol. 18 / no. 130 P15
website: www.inq7.net

BLD bears SARS cross

GMA names Bobby Romulo to head Iraq rehab projects

By Carlito Pablo

EIGHT years to the month after he was forced to give up the foreign affairs portfolio during the Ramos administration, Roberto Romulo is back in the Cabinet.

Romulo, who resigned in April 1995 as a result of public outrage over the execution in Singapore of Filipino domestic helper Flor Contemplacion, has been named chair of the Public-Private Sector Task Force that will coordinate the Philippines’ participation in the reconstruction of post-war Iraq.

The job comes “with the rank of secretary,” President Macapagal-Arroyo’s spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said yesterday in a teleconference.

“We know this guy is qualified,” Bunye said of the unabashedly pro-United States Romulo.

As though to prove this, Romulo will have four Cabinet secretaries, three am-

GMA NAMES/ A4

US turns up heat on Syria, cuts pipeline

WASHINGTON—Washington turned up the heat on Damascus yesterday, announcing that an Iraqi connected with a plot to assassinate former US president George Bush was spotted in Syria, as another wanted man was netted in Baghdad.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell had moved on Tuesday to ease Arab and Muslim fears that the United States plans to follow the Iraq war by invading Iran or Syria, but Washington is continuing to pile pressure on Damascus.

It shut off a pipeline which it says was transporting oil in violation of UN sanctions on Iraq as the latest attempt to intimidate a country it fears could jeopardize its efforts to rebuild Iraq.

US President George W. Bush has accused Syria of having chemical weapons and US officials have branded the regime of Bashar al-Assad as a “rogue” and a “terrorist” state.

Until war erupted in neighboring Iraq, illicit supplies of cheap Iraqi oil helped buoy Syria’s frail economy and enabled its government to put off making painful reforms.

US TURNS/ A4

WHERE angels fear to tread, St. Michael’s Hospital in Toronto, site of the largest SARS outbreak outside of Asia, carries the mural of the patron of sick sailors and soldiers and now perhaps, the SARS-stricken as well. AFP

BLD: A community of close interaction

BUKAS Loob Sa Diyos (BLD) is a Catholic Charismatic community with 17 “districts” all over the Philippines, one in Hong Kong, and 18 more in the United States and Canada.

Its leaders describe BLD as a “community of districts,” and close interaction among the members has always been the trademark of each district, which is urged to consider itself as a family unit.

The community originated in the Philippines, and most of the members are Filipinos. But the complete roster consists of many other nationalities and “heritage backgrounds” as well—American, Canadian, Italian, Irish, Quebecois, Romanian and Czech.

Each BLD district is overseen by the local archdiocese, to ensure that all activities and teachings are in accordance with

BLD/ A5

HK folk storm heaven with prayers

HONG KONG—Living under the threat of the pneumonia-like SARS, the commerce-centered people of Hong Kong are flocking to pray for heavenly intervention to ward off the deadly virus.

The pilgrimages began about two weeks ago, soon after the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), when Catholic and Protestant adherents staged a series of prayer rallies and were quickly followed by Buddhist groups exhorting the power of the heavens to help fight the disease.

In this predominantly Chinese populated former British colony, Taoism as well as Buddhism are among the dominant religions. Confucianism, ancestor worship and ancient animist beliefs are also widely practiced.

Hong Kong has been one of the places

HK FOLK/ A5

‘Public health duty is your religious duty’

TORONTO—For hundreds of Catholic faithful in Toronto, it will be a solitary Easter this year.

The archdiocese of Toronto has ordered all its parishes in the city to omit drinking wine from a common cup during communion, to put the communion host in people’s hands instead of on their tongues, to replace the kissing of the crucifix on Good Friday with a bow, and to give the sign of peace by bowing instead of shaking hands.

Bishop John C. Boissonneau of the Toronto archdiocese told people under quarantine to stay home, even during Easter weekend.

Easter week is the most important event in the Catholic calendar. Under normal circumstances, many adherents would attend Masses on Thursday, Friday and Sunday.

“Some people may feel a certain tension or stress between what they regard as their religious duty and their public health duty. Let me tell you, their public health duty is their religious duty,” Boissonneau said.

The restrictions were issued after Canadian health authorities last Sunday ordered all 500 members of the Bukas Loob sa Diyos (BLD) Covenant Community to stay in their homes because of possible infection by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

A cluster of 29 members of the Philippine-based Catholic charismatic group in Toronto had been identified as possible SARS cases. Two doctors who treated those who were sick were also infected.

The 10-day home quarantine order came after health officials found out belatedly that the 29 people shared some-

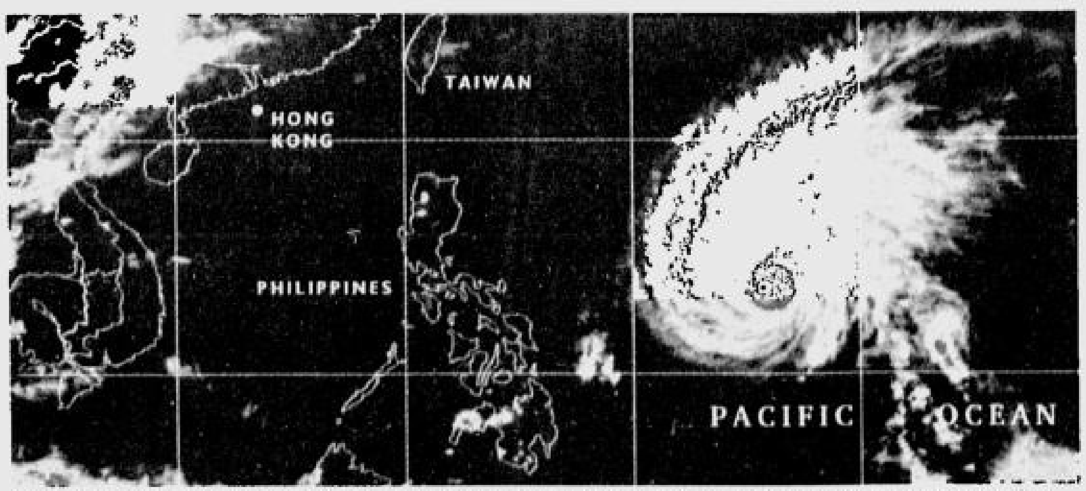
BLD BEARS/ A5

3 babies born in HK show signs of SARS

HONG KONG—Three babies who were born prematurely to Hong Kong mothers with SARS are having difficulty breathing and might have the deadly illness although they initially tested negative for the virus, a pediatrician said yesterday.

The babies, including one whose mother had died last Monday, were delivered by Cesarian section to avoid complications from medicines used to treat Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and because the mothers were seriously ill, Dr. Hon Kam-lun told Asso-

3 BABIES/ A5



EYE of the storm has been estimated by Pagasa to be 1,150 km southeast of Northern Luzon by this afternoon and could hit Philippine land mass by late Friday or early Saturday.

‘Kujira’ a whale of a typhoon

TYPHOON Kujira, now over the Pacific Ocean, has intensified further and was on course for Northern Luzon, the weather bureau warned yesterday. It will be named Amang once it enters the Philippine area of responsibility.

Latest satellite data of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration indicated that Kujira—a Japanese word for “whale”—was at 1,460 kilometers southeast of Northern Luzon at 2 p.m. yesterday.

It has maximum sustained winds of 165 kilometers per hour near the center and gustiness of

‘KUJIRA’ / A3

Water experts discuss big flop

By Jerry Esplanada

(Last of two parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

KYOTO, Japan—The overnight sensation has turned into a big flop.

For launching what it called the world’s “biggest privatization project” in 1997, the Philippines became the toast of water experts. But it was an entirely different story six years later with the failed water distribution project in Metro Manila of the government concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc.

The just concluded Third World Water Forum took note of Maynilad’s predicament, along with other failed water privatization projects in Argentina, Bolivia and South Africa.

Delegates from the European Commission stressed the need to study these cases, noting: “You learn as much from your mistakes as your failures.”

Nongovernment organizations who took part

WATER/ A4

EARTH DAY RITES. Mother Earth Unlimited project head (with Roy Alvarez) Chin Chin Gutierrez started a 5-year planting program at the foot of Mt. Banahaw last year with the help of PCSO, SMC and Manila Seedlings Bank. *(Story on Page A3.)*

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon and Eastern Visayas will experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/17/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FrontPage

Meralco refund a tough task, says new ERC chief

By Carlito Pablo and Ronnel W. Domingo

RETURNING P28 billion in overcharges to Manila Electric Co. customers as ordered by the Supreme Court may be easier said than done, according to the head of the government agency that will decide the mechanics of the refund.

"The magnitude and the complexity of the issues are enough to really give us time to pause and think how to best comply with the Supreme Court action," the chair of the Energy Regulatory Commission, Manuel Sanchez, said in an interview with dzRH radio.

For starters, the beneficiaries of the refund would need to be identified, he said. These range from millions of small-scale consumers to heavy electricity users like industrial firms.

He explained that in the case of small-scale electricity users, a large number are actually paying bills that are not in their names.

And where the heavy users are concerned, some factories and businesses have closed down for one reason or another, Sanchez said.

He noted that there were at least 150,000 big industrial users and 3.5 million small electricity consumers like households.

Sanchez, who was appointed ERC chair a few days before the high tribunal ruled with finality on the Meralco refund case, said that aside from the problem of identifying beneficiaries and determining the amounts to be refunded, the effect of such an undertaking on the economy should be considered.

"The most important consideration is its effect on our economy and to the country in general, that's why this is not an easy decision to make," he said.

Earlier, Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said that the "long-term viability" of Meralco was a key factor in considering the implementation of the refund order.

Sanchez could not say how long it would take the ERC to draw up the mechanism for the refund.

"We're not giving a deadline when this will be decided," Sanchez said.

A proposal has been made to convert the P28 billion amount due for refund into shares of stock in Meralco so consumers will have a say in the running of the public utility firm controlled by the Lopez Group.

SANCHEZ: Easier said than done

Sanchez said that he has not personally seen any such proposal but urged the stakeholders in the issue, including Meralco, to come up with their own suggestions.

"We have to place these all on the table so we can study them," he said. "We have to come to a very methodical, reasonable and rational decision that will comply best with the Supreme Court decision."

"We have to collate every (information given to us) and have to be very very neutral," Sanchez said. "The ERC's credibility must be very clear."

Full refund? No way

Meralco president Jesus Francisco has declared flatly that the company will not be able to refund all its customers within a year because of its financial difficulties.

"Based on our cash flow, there is no way that we can finance a full refund, the total of which may have reached P30 billion," Francisco said in an interview.

He said the company's management would seek a meeting with the ERC to clarify how much would be actually refunded.

The SC order has raised worries that the utility was in danger of defaulting on about P5 billion in debts in the first semester as it was not able to obtain approval to increase its rates at the desired level.

Meralco had asked the ERC for an average rate increase of P1.12 per kilowatt-hour but the agency approved a hike of only 5.4 centavos per kWh.

Francisco said Meralco's lawyers would be presenting their recommendation on the mode of refund before the company's board of directors meet on April 28.

In earlier interviews, Meralco officials said the refund could amount to as low as P8 billion but consumer groups said last week that it had reached P30.2 billion as of March.

Different consumer groups have also demanded an immediate, lump-sum cash refund while others proposed converting the amount to shares of stock that would be issued to consumers.

Yesterday, the Pambansang Lakas ng Mamamalakaya sa Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) fisherfolk group dismissed as "defeatist" a think tank's proposal for converting the refund amount into Meralco shares of ownership as it would only help the utility "to evade its obligation to consumers."

Pamalakaya said the University of the Philippines-based Freedom from Debt Coalition was giving false hopes to 3.5 million residential customers.

A stock-issuance scheme would ensure that the Lopez group would retain control of Meralco's operations, said Fernanco Hicap, Pamalakaya national chair.

Pamalakaya likened the FDC proposal to the cases of the Hacienda Luisita and the P130-billion coconut levy fund where "farmers became stockholders but were never allowed to speak and exercise their power, and remained destitute."

Hicap called for an outright cash refund, saying that small consumers badly needed the money.

He endorsed the People Opposed to Warrantless Electricity Rates' call for an immediate cash refund where residential customers could get between P900 and P5,400.

The FDC has proposed that consumers use their combined shares to acquire seats in the Meralco board.

"(This would) increase and strengthen consumers' leverage in pressing for changes in the management and operations of the distribution utility," FDC said.

Napocor to get debt break from revised IPP deals

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—With a streamlined National Power Corp. in place, the government is working to reduce the state-owned power firm's massive dollar debts by forging new contracts with independent power producers (IPPs) this year, Napocor's former president said yesterday.

Rolando Quilala, who is now Napocor senior vice president for corporate affairs, said at least one contract involving a high-profile power project would ease Napocor's future obligations by as much as $147 million.

He said two other IPP contracts involving state-owned hydroelectric facilities would be "cleaned up" to enable the government to auction off these assets.

The savings would help finance the creation of new power plants, which would be essential for the next 10 years, Quilala said.

He said the renegotiated contracts involved three of five IPP contracts which a government review team, headed by Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, had last year classified as "flawed."

These contracts cover the 50-year-old Ambuklao hydroelectric dam, the 45-year-old Binga hydroelectric dam and the San Roque multipurpose dam project (SRMDP), all of which are located in or near Benguet province.

Renegotiation

The review team had recommended that 28 other IPP contracts be subjected to further renegotiation.

A substantial portion of Napocor's outstanding debts involve these IPP contracts which oblige the state power firm to buy the electricity the IPPs generate regardless of need or price.

Quilala said the Napocor would also present to the Energy Regulatory Commission a new electricity-pricing scheme that would balance the firm's new corporate outlook against President Macapagal-Arroyo's demand for lower consumer rates.

He said the recent debacle over the overcharging by the Manila Electric Co. has prompted Napocor to come up with a new pricing formula that would not rely on a company's expenditures.

The Supreme Court ruled last week that Meralco must refund its consumers some P28 billion in overcharges since February 1994, after the defunct Energy Regulatory Board discovered that Meralco had been passing on its income taxes to its customers.

Quilala said Napocor would ask the ERC for clearance to impose a "performance-based" method of computing and increasing electricity prices.

Instead of computing electricity prices according to its expenses and revenues, or the government-approved 12-percent ceiling for rate of return on rate base (RORB), Napocor would apply long-range marginal costing or long-term price targets that the company would try to accomplish at a given deadline, Quilala said.

But the key to Napocor's financial status is the renegotiated IPP contracts, he said.

The San Roque Power Corp., which owns the SRMDP contract, has offered Napocor a lower supply volume than the contracted 150-megawatt ceiling that was forged during the administration of former President Fidel Ramos.

Ronald Perez, who acts as Napocor's liaison to SRPC, said the firm "has nominated a lower capacity of 85 MW for the first 12 years of the contract, which will be gradually raised to 115 MW toward the end of the lease."

Perez said the reduced supply contract would enable the Napocor to save up to $147 million (P7.7 billion) in the next 25 years of SRMDP's operations.

A special government action group, led by Energy Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. and Edgardo del Fonso, president of the Public Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (Psalm), has been tasked to oversee the negotiations, Quilala said.

Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta meanwhile criticized the allegedly "secret" negotiations between Napocor and the IPPs to review the controversial IPP deals, saying the public must be fully informed.

Oreta said the energy officials involved in the discussions appeared to have pulled a fast one on electricity consumers when it claimed earlier this week that only 12 of these Napocor contracts still needed to be renegotiated because the 23 others have already been resolved.

Maravilla; 23

HERNAND H. Maravilla of Zamboanga City, died on Tuesday after a lingering illness. A biology major at the Ateneo de Zamboanga University, he was 23.

He is survived by his parents Cecil and Rolly; sisters and brothers: Ching, Maricel, Francis and Ronnie.

His remains lie at the La Merced Memorial Homes, Zamboanga City. Interment will be announced later.

Non-PMA officers say PNP revamp is 'elitist'

By TJ Burgonio

A GROUP of disgruntled police officers has criticized the recent Philippine National Police reshuffle as being elitist as most of the officers appointed to key positions were graduates of the Philippine Military Academy.

"This system of elitism and unequal access to key positions breeds demoralization, disunity and dissatisfaction," said police director Lucas Managuelod, president of the Police ROTC Graduates for Integrity, Morality and Order (Primo).

Managuelod urged PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. and the National Police Commission "to rationalize" the designation of officers to key posts.

He noted that those included in the recent reorganization were PMA alumni "to the exclusion of equally qualified and competent officers" who were commissioned.

The Primo charges were contained in an April 2 resolution which was sent to Ebdane, the Napolcom and the Civil Service Commission.

PNP officials announced late Tuesday a major reorganization involving 19 officials following the retirement on April 1 of Deputy Director General Clyde Fernandez, deputy chief for administration.

Of those named to directorial and regional posts, 16 are PMA graduates and the rest commissioned.

The three were Senior Superintendents Isnaji Bantala, acting director for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao; Ricardo Dapat, director for the Maritime Group, and Alejandro Andres, acting deputy director for intelligence.

PNP official Ricardo de Leon, director for police community relations, maintained that there was no discrimination against non-PMA alumni in the selection of officials in any reshuffle.

"There are at least three officers from their (Primo) ranks who were included in the reshuffle. How can they say that there is discrimination?" he said in an interview.

Managuelod, who was relieved as director for investigation and detective management last December reportedly because of his alleged links to opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, said any appointment or promotion should be based on merit.

"The designation to key positions must be based on merit, performance, qualifications and other parameters that could bring efficient service to the Filipino people," he said.

Primo also adopted a resolution on April 2 urging Ebdane and the Napolcom to recall the appointment of Director Victor Signey as acting chief of the directorial staff on April 1.

Managuelod said that Signey's appointment violated the law that created the PNP as he will be retiring on Aug. 29, or four months from now.

The law prohibits any official, except the PNP chief, from being promoted or named to a higher post if he has less than a year of service before his retirement, Managuelod said.

PNP sources said that Signey, former director for comptrollership, was reluctant to accept the new post. He was kicked upstairs to accommodate junior officers seeking promotion, the source said. Signey could not be reached for comment.

Earth week at Earthaven

EARTHAVEN, the only fully maintained Eco-Village in the Philippines around Metro Manila, is marking the end of the Earth Week celebrations on April 26.

Activities include tours of the 37-hectare Nature Reserve where ambassadors of several nations will participate in the tree planting at the Global Peace Garden at 11 a.m. Lunch will follow with organic offerings, including edible flowers served according to the indigenous traditions of the area. The highlight is a Dita Sandico Ong Fashion show featuring hand woven, native fibers and indigenous materials. She is internationally known for her innovative designs of chic apparel for men and women that are equally at home in beaches as well as elegant gatherings.

Located in the rolling hills of San Mateo, Rizal, Earthaven is a living laboratory of conservation in a Philippine setting. The environment includes beautiful natural features such as all weather streams, waterfalls surrounded by lush tropical flora and enhanced by a rejuvenating spirulina fountain, 7 healing gardens, nature paths with survival games set up permanently.

Fr. Macky; 51

FR. Macario I. Cabatingan, a social activist, died at the Maria Reyna Hospital in Cagayan de Oro City on Tuesday. He was 51.

His body will be brought to his hometown in Lagonglong and Gingoog City for viewing by his former parishioners.

His body will be brought back to the San Agustin Cathedral in Cagayan de Oro on Sunday. Burial is scheduled on Monday.

Members of Xavier University High School batch '69 are urged to remember their classmate, Fr. Macky, in their prayers.

NIPPON FOUNDATION FELLOWS
Dean Jose M. Cruz (4th from right) of the Ateneo de Manila University School of Sciences recently awarded the Nippon Foundation Asian Public Intellectuals Fellowships for 2003-04 to Dr. Carlo Panelo, Danilo Reyes, lawyer Raquel Pastores-Corro, Chief Public Attorney Persida Rueda-Acosta, Dr. Isagani Yuzon and lawyer Doram Dumalagan. Prof. Randolf David (4th from left) was guest speaker at the ceremonies held at the Ateneo. The fellowships enable public intellectuals, through research, to come up with ideas that contribute to the public good and promote mutual learning in the region.

Fraport doesn't come with clean hands on Naia 3 deal, says Yasay

THE GERMAN company in the consortium that built the controversial Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport "does not come with clean hands" but projects itself as a victim of the Filipino people in the airport mess, according to MIA-Naia Association of Service Operators (Maso) chair Perfecto Yasay Jr.

Yasay said Fraport of Germany has only itself to blame for being part of of many questionable deals of the local consortium, the Philippine International Airport Terminal Co. Inc., (Piatco), including a controversial contract with one Alfredo Liongson.

"For one, it did not hire a Filipino lawyer but relied on a German lawyer instead," Yasay added in a press statement.

Yasay's organization has sued Piatco, where Fraport is a minority partner, for unilaterally deciding, with the concurrence of some government officials, to pre-terminate the existing contracts of independent companies to do business at the airport. Maso is the association of service operators at the Naia.

Piatco, under its contract, would have the last say whether these companies, some of which compete in cargo handling, would be allowed to operate in the new terminal.

Fraport, Yasay said, was part of the deal but now makes it appear otherwise.

"It was a victim of the Chengs of Piatco. It was a victim of its own neglect because it is basic to have local lawyers in a foreign country, especially for projects of this magnitude," he said.

Fraport provided the bulk of the funds to build the terminal but it was the Chengs, with about $16 million in capital infusion (including $10 million borrowed from Fraport), which came out as the majority stockholder of Piatco.

The Piatco contract has been declared null and void by both the executive branch and the Senate blue ribbon committee citing basic flaws such as violations of the BOI law and lack of the requisite approvals by government entities.

The Supreme Court is expected to issue its ruling shortly on legality of the Piatco contract.

Erap like Jesus? 'Give us a break'

By Volt Contreras

"GIVE us a break."

The leftist group Pamalakaya's reaction to a lawyer's comparing JE to JC sums up contrary sentiments aired yesterday on the subject.

Crime novels, not the Bible, mirror the story of Joseph Estrada, according to Pamalakaya information officer Gerry Albert Corpuz.

In an interview on Tuesday, Estrada's defense lawyer Prospero Crescini said the ex-president's downfall and legal woes recalled Gospel accounts of the persecution of Jesus Christ. He cited the Catholic Church and anti-Estrada forces in the civil society movement as the modern-day equivalents of political and religious power blocs during Christ's time.

Wait, there's more. Crescini said a draft of the defense panel's opening statements when trial resumes after the Lenten break would include parallelisms between Estrada's and Christ's trial.

The lawyer was invoking his own "absurd" gospel, Corpuz bewailed. His prescription for Crescini: "Repent."

But this does not guarantee forgiveness—not even this week —from Deputy Speaker for the Visayas Raul Gonzalez, former House prosecutor in Estrada's Senate impeachment trial earlier.

"Jesus Christ was conceived without sin," Gonzalez protested yesterday. "And He did not have many wives and mansions."

In fact, the solon said, neither should Erap be likened to Julius Caesar, the way former Chief Justice Andres Narvasa had done as the ex-president's counsel during the impeachment trial.

"Caesar had only one Cleopatra," Gonzalez said. Estrada's lawyers, he added, were way off the mark. "What next? Will they compare him with Jose Rizal?"

Let alone Caesar, Erap didn't even deserve to be measured against Dimas, the thief who died with Christ on Calvary, said Carol Araullo, convenor of the watchdog group Plunder Watch.

"At least Dimas was repentant," Araullo said.

But in a recent talk with the INQUIRER, Estrada insisted that his womanizing days were long over. He justified his penchant for women by citing the two "environments" in which he thrived—first the movies, and then politics—that supposedly made him a magnet for women.

A few of these women gave him children, and the fabulous mansions he built for them have consisted some of the most graphic evidence against him.

Estrada said he gave support only to his offspring and "some" of the women who got into tight financial situations.

He had loving words for his legitimate wife, Sen. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito Estrada who, he said, had been "extremely understanding" and devoted, staying by his side in good times and bad.

"Where (else) can you find a woman like that?" he asked, smiling.

The Virgin Mary? *With Juliet Labog-Javellana and Agnes Donato*

MYSTICAL MOUNTAIN

Pilgrims told to respect Banahaw

DOLORES, Quezon—Environment authorities here have warned pilgrims, mountaineers and "thrill seekers" thronging Mt. Banahaw here during Holy Week to respect the mystical mountain and observe all safety measures.

Manny Calayag, the municipal environment officer, called on the estimated half-million devotees expected to trek to the holy mountain this week to help the local government and volunteer groups in the maintenance and protection of the now environmentally fragile mountain peak.

"It is wrong for the pilgrims to think that just because they paid P5 as entrance fee to Mt. Banahaw, they now have all the luxury of doing what they want to do and would also now leave behind all their trash," he said.

Calayag said a part of the entrance fees collected last year was used to construct several toilet facilities in strategic spots in Mt. Banahaw.

He also reminded the pilgrims not to forget the cardinal rule in dealing with trash.

"As much as possible, every pilgrim should be the one responsible for his own trash. They should all try to bring their garbage down when they descend," he said.

Jay Lim, Tanggol Kalikasan-Southern Tagalog community coordinator, said he was alarmed by the amount of waste left behind by hordes of devotees who climb up the mountain during Holy Week and the disturbing signs of environmental destruction taking place.

He said there were several areas in Mt. Banahaw showing signs of having been poached for timber.

"The death of three children from flash floods last year in Dolores signifies a matter-of-life-and-death warning," he said.

MYSTICAL Mount Banahaw: Each pilgrim or thrill-seeker is responsible for his own trash.

"The cutting of young trees for tent pitching or slicing off their bark should be strictly avoided. If we all really want to make our stay pious and positive, we should all refresh our ABCs on basic mountain climbing," he said.

He said Tanggol Kalikasan was producing a multimedia documentary on the environmental protection and education campaign for Mt. Banahaw.

"We're making arrangements to present some of these educational and enlightening modules during this pilgrim season," he said.

Mt. Banahaw is one of the largest inactive volcanoes in the Philippines and a Mecca for thousands of devotees, especially during the Lenten season.

It straddles the towns of Lucban, Tayabas, Sariaya, Candelaria and Dolores in Quezon; and the Rizal towns of Nagcarlan, Liliw and Majayjay; and San Pablo City in Laguna province.

Calayag said Bantay-Banahaw volunteer groups last year collected at least 11 large dump trucks full of garbage that were left by pilgrims in different areas on the mountaintop.

He said a collection spot for the P5 registration fee has been set up in Barangay Bagong Anyo. The local government will be issuing receipts for the entrance fees.

According to Calayag, there are also two pilgrim's registration centers in Barangay Kinabuhayan and Sta. Lucia, both widely used entry gates to the mountain.

He said the local government, with the help of volunteer groups led by Banahaw de Dolores, has put in place safety preparations for the protection of mountain devotees. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Go to the beaches, but . . .

By Armand N. Nocum

AS PEOPLE head off to beaches and other vacation places, they should find some time to reflect on the sufferings of Christ, especially in today's celebration of Maundy Thursday.

Still, Church officials admit that it is not totally a bad idea for people to use the holidays to spend quality time with their families.

"We have to use this time for spiritual renewal, but of course, this is also a time for families to go to the beach and spend time together," said Bishop Ramon Arguelles, head of the CBCP's Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.

He said the Church also understands the need for families to come together because it wants the family to be united.

"We should not forget the reason why we have a vacation and that is we are recalling a very central point of the Christian faith," he said of the Lenten holidays.

He said people should take time to hear Mass, pray and confess.

On Maundy Thursday, Catholics are encouraged to go to confession and hold vigils in the churches to accompany Christ in his sufferings.

Today, the Christian world recalls the Last Supper and Christ's washing of the feet of his 12 Apostles before his arrest and betrayal by Judas Iscariot.

Senate OKs bill vs trafficking of women, kids

A LANDMARK measure that will criminalize the act of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, locally or internationally, has been approved on third and final reading by the Senate.

Senate Bill 2444 or the Anti-Trafficking Act of 2003 covers penalties for such offenses as prostitution, sexual exploitation and slavery.

The Senate passed the Anti-Trafficking Act after hurdling the periods of interpellation and amendments, paving the way for a comprehensive definition of trafficking in persons.

Trafficking is now defined as the "recruitment, transfer, provision, harboring, receipt or deployment of person for the purpose of forced labor, slavery, sexual exploitation, involuntary servitude, debt bondage, physical and other forms of abuse, removal or sale of organs or involvement in armed activities or other similar acts."

The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) hailed the bill as a victory for women who worked hard for its passage. The agency is under the Office of the President and was at the forefront of the campaign of the bill.

"We are thankful to the Senate committee on women, youth and the family relations chair Luisa "Loi" Estrada and Senate President Franklin Drilon for crafting a progressive anti-trafficking law to effectively combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children, provide timely assistance to trafficked victims and prosecute traffickers," said NCRFW chairperson Aurora Javate-de Dios

Non-government organizations, led by the Zonta Club of Makati and Environs, worked hand in hand with the NCRFW for the passage of the bill.

Other NGOs were Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, Women LEAD, Women's Legal Bureau, Third World Movement Against Exploitation of Women, Women's Health, Samaritana, Buklod-Olongapo, and Trade Union Congress of the Philippines.

Aside from the NCRFW, government agencies such as the Commission of Filipinos Overseas, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Commission on Human Rights, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Labor and Employment and the National Anti-poverty Commission took the lead in the campaign.

The Anti-Trafficking Act provides for a penalty ranging from 20 years imprisonment to life imprisonment and fine from P1 million to 5 million for offenders.

Under the approved bill, traffickers shall suffer the maximum penalty if the victim was a child; or if the victim died or incurred Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS); or if the offender was related to the victim.

The measure will likewise provide for the protection and rehabilitation of survivors by according them temporary shelter, health care, legal assistance and counseling to victims.

The House of Representatives approved HB 4432 championed by House committee on women chair Josefina Joson in May 2002. Bicameral discussion on the Anti-Trafficking Act is scheduled when Congress resumes session this month.

'Kujira' a whale of a typhoon

From page A1

up to 200 kph. It is forecast to move west northwest at 19 kph, Pagasa said.

The US Navy tagged Kujira a "super typhoon" with maximum sustained winds of 250 kph and gustiness of up to 305 kph.

Its eye is estimated to be at 1,150 km southeast of Northern Luzon by this afternoon, at 790 km east southeast of Northern Luzon by tomorrow afternoon and at 400 km east of Northern Luzon by Saturday afternoon, Pagasa said.

"If it will maintain its speed and direction—it's still at west northwest at 24 kph—it could hit the Philippine land mass by early Saturday or late Friday," Reuters quoted weather forecaster Bobby Rivero as saying.

Hundreds of thousands of Filipinos are expected to be on the move by land, air and sea over the four-day Easter weekend starting today as they visit churches, travel to the provinces or head to the beach.

The typhoon developed as a tropical depression in the vicinity of the Caroline Islands late last week. It continued to gain strength as it moved in a generally west northwest track.

Pagasa said Eastern Luzon and Eastern Visayas would experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms today.

The rest of the country will be partly cloudy or occasionally cloudy with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms. *Gerald Lacuarta with a report from Reuters*

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Re-greening Mt. Banahaw

By Roy Alvarez
Contributor

THE UNITED Nations has declared 2003 as the International Year of Fresh Water, an apt follow-up to 2002's International Year of Mountains.

Our denuded mountains have resulted in the depletion of water tables and devastating flash floods. Without forest cover, rainfall is not absorbed and stored, and the water flows to the lowlands stripping soil along the way.

Although Asia is surrounded by water, there is less and less to drink—a consequence of mismanaged garbage. Add denuded mountains to this equation, and the planet experiences accelerated global warming and climate change.

Earth Day (April 22) last year marked the start of a five-year tree planting program launched by Mother Earth Unlimited for Mt. Banahaw, the source of water for the provinces of Quezon, Laguna and Rizal.

The historic mountain, which provided sanctuary for our national heroes, is also considered sacred. And during the Holy Week, thousands of pilgrims come to meditate on the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ, a practice that is part and parcel of indigenous Christian belief.

Responsibility for the condition of Banahaw has to be assigned to the mountain communities. It was with this realization that Chin Chin Gutierrez and myself, in our capacity as project heads for Mother Earth Unlimited, organized a Council of Elders made up of representatives of the 75 religious sects living at the foot of Banahaw.

This was how the Bayanihan sa Kasagraduhan ng Bundok Banahaw was formed.

According to local lore, visitors seeking to be healed at the holy places of Banahaw must first undergo a cleansing ritual at the male and female waterfalls at Sta. Lucia.

The healing program commences with interfaith invocations and indigenous Christian rituals and processions. To accept the change that must take place, the communities have to understand that healing their ecosystem will restore and maintain the sacredness of the mountain.

Toward this end, workshop symposiums were organized and the Banahaw de Dolores Outdoor Club, with the participation of mountaineers and volunteers, cleaned the mountain of tons of garbage left by years of annual pilgrimages.

With the help of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, San Miguel Corp., Manila Seedlings Bank and Mother Earth Unlimited, 30,000 seedlings were earmarked for planting on Banahaw at the start of the rainy season last year.

To show his support for the project, Quezon Gov. Wilfredo Enverga assigned me as a consultant for the province's environmental projects. The mayors and environmental officers of Dolores, Tiaong, Candelaria, Sariaya, Tayabas and Lucban, the municipalities surrounding the mountain, also provided support. Through their efforts, the required manpower for tree planting was supplied by the local officials, teachers, students, police and military personnel, and civic organizations.

Several municipalities of Laguna and Rizal situated near Banahaw have also asked to participate. The reforestation program will resume as soon as the rainy season kicks in.

The success of the project is certain. We only hope that this success will spur other areas to start similar projects for their own mountains and for their own future.

Mother Earth has been warning us for years by reacting, sometimes violently, to our wasteful lifestyles. We ignore her at our own peril.

The author is an actor, environmentalist and lecturer on eco-waste management.

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GMA names Romulo to head Iraq projects

From page A1

bassadors and one special envoy among the members of the task force.

They are Secretaries Blas Ople (foreign affairs), Patricia Sto. Tomas (labor), Manuel Roxas III (trade) and Vincent Perez (energy), Ambassadors Bayani Mangibin (Kuwait) and Bahnarim Guinomla (Saudi Arabia), Ambassador-designate Jose Ibazeta (Iraq), and Special Envoy Roy Cimatu of the Middle East Preparedness Team.

In Executive Order No. 194 dated April 14, Ms Macapagal also appointed as task force members the president of the Philippine Constructors Association and "other private sector representatives" still to be named.

The Public-Private Sector Task Force is one of two groups formed by the President in connection with the reconstruction of post-war Iraq.

The other is the humanitarian task force co-chaired by Ople and Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes. This will be in charge of sending Filipino peacekeepers and social workers to Iraq.

Shadow DFA secretary

Romulo is reputed to have been Ms Macapagal's "shadow foreign secretary" during the stint of Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. at the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Guingona resigned as foreign secretary last year over policy differences with the President regarding the presence of US military forces in the country as part of the Balikatan 02-1 exercises.

He was succeeded at the DFA by Ople, then an opposition senator, who shares the strong pro-US bent of Ms Macapagal and Romulo.

Before his current appointment, Romulo was serving as Ms Macapagal's adviser on international competitiveness.

He is a former executive of the IBM multinational company, a key American interest, and the chair of the Philippine representation before the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation's business advisory council.

ROBERTO ROMULO returns to the Cabinet as the Philippines' czar of post-Saddam reconstruction.

Bunye also said Romulo would fly to Washington this weekend in an "expedited mission" to coordinate with American authorities.

He will later proceed to Kuwait, which hosted the US and British forces that carried out the war on neighboring Iraq.

According to EO 194, Romulo's task force will provide Philippine representation with the Pentagons Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance led by Jay Garner, a retired general who was earlier designated as administrator of war-ravaged Iraq.

The task force will also assist the participation of Philippine companies in activities in Iraq concerning public works and highways, transportation, information and communications, energy and agriculture, as well as in "public services" like education, sanitation, civil administration and "other service industries."

It will be given a budget of P10 million from the President's contingency fund.

Brain drain up again but gov't not worried

From page A1

never been an alien concept for Filipinos. As much as 9 percent of the country's 80 million people seek their fortunes in North America, Europe, the Middle East and northeastern Asia.

The money they send back—about $7 billion a year—helps to feed, clothe, house and educate their families and sends beneficial ripples of spending through the economy.

While most used to be unskilled laborers, which was fine as the country struggled to create enough jobs for an ever-growing population, the ones now leaving are increasingly those with the skills to make a difference in the Philippines.

Local newspapers frequently lament the loss of manpower and experience, especially the recent phenomenon of medical doctors who retrain as nurses so they can get better paying jobs abroad.

But senior government officials don't see a problem.

"I don't see any literature that is of a scientific nature that would indicate that this is reaching crisis proportions," Labor Secretary Patricia Santo Tomas told Reuters.

The departures may actually be good, she said, because the moves create vacancies for less experienced workers.

"Some of it is movement of skilled workers, some of this is movement of professionals, but it's nothing that the local economy can't handle at this time," Santo Tomas said.

Many don't return

Finance Secretary Jose Camacho, who spent many years overseas, said he wasn't worried either.

"There's certainly enough people coming back—better trained, better exposure, wider perspective, global outlook," he told Reuters. "That's very positive. You need to have a constant flow of people coming in and out." But in a country where one in 10 workers is without a job and a third of the population lives on a couple of dollars a day, the best opportunities are reserved for outstanding talents or those with connections, and many who find work abroad do not return.

"What compelled me to consider migrating was a feeling of frustration," said a 39-year-old former banker from Manila who returned home to work a few years ago but left again in 2002.

"The social order is still the same generally. Change is slow in coming. I don't think I will see any significant developments in my generation."

Dr. Federico Macaranas of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) in Makati said the country benefits from the ebb and flow of labor. "It is not a brain drain. When you say brain drain, it's negative," he said.

As a former undersecretary for foreign affairs, Macaranas helped to form groups all over the world where Filipino workers could share their expertise with those back home.

"They need not return," he said. "In an Internet age and in an age of financial transfers, the benefit to us might be their ability to continuously update their knowledge when they are abroad."

Hopelessness

Of the estimated 7.41 million Filipinos overseas, three million are short-term contract workers, two million are permanent residents and the rest are undocumented.

Economists say the money they send back eventually multiplies into 30 percent of all consumer spending.

A survey by Pulse Asia last year showed that one in five Filipinos would like to leave.

"Hopelessness for the country's future has been a stable phenomenon, not a fluke of specific circumstances," Asia Pulse said. "The brain drain shows no sign of slowing down. Alas, it's even getting worse." Many leave with mixed feelings.

Love for family and country is strong but the better pay and living conditions are tempting. Some seek political stability and escape from violence, while others look for social acceptability based on achievements, not connections.

But a dermatologist recently back from studying in the United States said being an educated professional earning a decent wage made life in the Philippines tolerable and even pleasant.

"My personal growth lies in coming back home," she said.

"And professionally, my future lies in Manila. If I stayed (in the United States), I'd just be another competent dermatologist. But I think back home, I can make an even bigger difference as an educator in dermatology."

An architect, who chose not to go abroad, said: "If all the people go, then the country will be nothing." "My staying here is something I know my heart wants fervently," she said. "Unexplainable in a way, but I guess matters of the heart always are." *Reuters*

US turns up heat on Syria, cuts oil pipeline

From page A1

Now, with US troops shutting down the pipeline used for these shipments, Syria must adjust to a loss of $1 billion in annual income at the same time the United States is threatening to intensify the pressure by imposing economic sanctions on Damascus.

An end to shipments of cut-rate Iraqi crude will bleed the Syrian government of cash—money that once possibly helped the ruling Baath Party buy political support and maintain its hold on power. With higher oil bills looming, Assad will be less able to withstand US economic and political pressure, some analysts say.

"It's a huge financial hit," said Jon Alterman, director of the Middle East Program at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. "The government of Syria doesn't have a lot of ways to get money."

US Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said Tuesday in Washington that American forces have shut down the cross-border pipeline, though he could not assure that the flow of oil between the two countries had dried up completely.

For more than two years, Syria imported 150,000 to 180,000 barrels of oil a day from Iraq, in defiance of United Nations efforts to regulate Iraqi exports and ensure that Baghdad spent its oil revenue only on food and other humanitarian needs.

In exchange for crude at bargain-basement prices, the Syrians provided Saddam with a source of cash outside UN control. These shipments—through a pipeline from Iraq's southern oil fields to a refinery in Banyas, Syria—were an open secret, although Syrian and Iraqi officials routinely denied their existence.

Kill-Bush plot

Early yesterday, a US official said a suspected high-ranking operative of the Iraqi intelligence service who is believed to have played a key role in a 1993 plot to assassinate then-US president George Bush was spotted in Syria. *(Story on Page A9.)*

Faruq Hijazi, whose last official post was Saddam Hussein's ambassador to Tunis, flew to Damascus on a commercial jet in an apparent attempt to seek refuge in the country following the toppling of the Iraqi government by US forces, he said.

Sending a signal to countries, including Syria, accused of "sponsoring terrorism," US special operations forces backed by army troops nabbed Mohammad Abbas, the Palestinian radical who masterminded the 1985 hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship. *(Story on page A.)*

Abbas, leader of the Palestine Liberation Front who was living in Iraq under the protection of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, was captured Monday in southern Baghdad, the US Central Command said late Tuesday.

He was sentenced in absentia in Italy to five life terms for his role in the Achille Lauro hijacking, in which an elderly, wheelchair-bound American tourist, Leon Klinghoffer, was murdered and thrown into the Mediterranean.

Searching for new leaders

US officials expressed hope the main hostilities were over with the fall of Saddam's hometown of Tikrit on Monday, but were not yet ready to declare victory.

"Our victory in Iraq is certain, but not yet complete," said US President George W. Bush on day 27 of the war.

Iraqis started tackling the thorny issue of searching for leaders to replace them.

In Ur, the meeting of some 80 delegates, who included local and exiled opposition leaders as well as religious officials, adopted a statement declaring that a future Iraqi government must be democratic and based on the rule of law, and that no leader should be imposed from outside.

But Iraq's leading Shiite group boycotted the meeting and a key opposition leader sent only a representative amid distrust over the role of the United States and internal division over how to craft a representative government.

The special White House envoy to the Iraqi opposition, Zalmay Khalilzad, told the meeting that the United States had "no intention of ruling Iraq" after the fall of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

The delegates also agreed Saddam's Baath party must be dissolved and called for a democratic federal system, but said a future government should be chosen on the basis of countrywide consultation and not based on communal identity.

They agreed to meet again in 10 days "to discuss procedures for developing an Iraqi interim authority." While the United States has made clear it intends retired US general Jay Garner to lead an interim administration, representatives of Iraq's majority Shiite community have said they won't accept anyone imposed from outside.

Shiite's protest

"We refuse to put ourselves under the thumb of the Americans or any other country, because that is not in the Iraqis' interests," said Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, the deputy head of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI), the main Shiite faction which boycotted the US-brokered meeting.

Dozens of Shiite Muslims staged an angry protest against the Pentagon-backed Iraqi opposition leader, Ahmed Chalabi, who has widely tipped to become the country's next leader.

Such anger was also visible in the northern city of Mosul, when a firefight broke out as the newly-appointed governor was making a speech which listeners deemed was too pro-US, witnesses said.

A doctor at the city hospital, Ayad al-Ramadhani, said 12 people had been killed and 60 wounded in the shooting.

Life in Baghdad remained far from normal six days after US troops entered. Most shops remained closed and many parts of the city still lacked water or electricity.

A US military officer said US forces planned to boost joint police patrols, bring more hospitals back into service and have power restored within 72 hours to parts of Baghdad, which has been without electricity since April 4. *AFP, AP*

Water experts discuss failed privatization project

From page A1

in the eight-day forum blamed privatization for the soaring water prices and confusion caused in some developing countries by the withdrawal of private firms whose projects had become unprofitable.

But there was also good news. The Philippines earned what a Filipino delegate called "pogi points" with both the Pasig River and Laguna de Bay getting multiple citations as best-practice examples of sustainable water resource initiatives.

At the Water Expo in Osaka, the Pasig River rehabilitation project shared center stage with two other exhibits of the consumer products giant Unilever—the Clean Brantas river program in Indonesia and the Lifebuoy Swathya Chetna health project in India.

In Shiga, Laguna de Bay was the Asian case study for both the Living Lakes global network and the World Lake Vision's call to action.

Osaka and Shiga co-hosted the conference, first held in Morocco in 1997, then the Netherlands in 2000.

The privatization of water supplies and sanitation needs was the cause of much controversy during the forum, both among delegates and between delegates and NGO representatives.

Some government and business sector delegates from nearly 180 countries pushed for massive private-sector investment in water and sanitation infrastructures to meet the United Nations millennium development goal of halving the number of people without clean water by 2015.

They argued that the only way this would happen was to allow private-sector control of water supply and sanitation needs.

Big business is eager to contribute expertise to solve pressing environmental problems, including a shortage of clean water. But Antony Burgmans, Unilever NV chair and chief executive officer, said corporations could do only so much.

"We can only lend a helping hand," said Burgman, who chaired the CEO panel at the forum in Osaka. "It's up to the governments to tackle the problem. Frankly, I am not all that confident that they will live up to their responsibility."

Priorities

According to a Japan Times report, Burgman argued that tackling water issues comes down to establishing priorities.

"When I see how much attention is given to the buildup of armies and the purchase of weaponry, I often wonder if the priorities are set correctly," he was quoted as saying. "The ongoing controversies over the privatization issue and the war in Iraq left many participants doubting whether the conference produced anything of value."

The forum, which gathered more than 20,000 water experts, government officials, NGO members and representatives of big water firms worldwide ended last week in disagreement over the privatization issue.

Its sponsor, the World Water Council (WWC), said at least 6,000 foreign delegates were in attendance.

Prior to the forum, Michel Camdessus, former managing director of the International Monetary Fund, issued a report urging governments to drastically increase funding for water projects and advocating privatization of water supplies and sanitation services.

But the forum declaration merely noted the report, citing the controversy over the issue.

The declaration, approved last March 23 by senior government officials, vowed to make water issues a top priority among governments and encouraged private-sector involvement in water supply and water-related issues.

It also called for:

- Access to clean water, which is essential for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger.
- Doubled spending on water infrastructure in developing countries.
- More investment in water supply and sanitation needs.
- Assistance to developing countries in devising integrated water resource management plans by 2005.
- Improved farm-use water management through innovative investment and research and development.
- Better legislative frameworks to protect water resources and prevent water pollution.
- Land-use regulations, disaster-warning and national risk-management systems to limit the impact of floods and droughts.
- Sharing of data and resources between states to minimize disaster damage.

But NGOs complained that the declaration failed to reflect their opinions despite the incorporation of the "user pays" and "polluter pays" principles.

They also branded the WWC as a "water mafia," and claimed that it was actually a lobby group for big construction and water firms.

The Maynilad case

Maynilad announced last December that it was returning its concession after failing to get the 72-percent rate increase it was seeking from the government. In October 2001, it was permitted an increase of P4.21 per cubic meter to cover its previous foreign exchange losses.

The firm also claimed that the state-run Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) had committed "breaches of its obligations under the concession agreement," and demanded $500 million in damages from the government.

Maynilad's financial records show that in 2001, its losses rose to P1.7 billion from P608 million the year before.

In a statement, Maynilad president Rafael Alunan cited "compelling financial, regulatory and natural causes in the last years" as the firm's reason for giving up the concession.

Maynilad was established in 1996 by Benpres Holdings Corp. (of the Lopez group of companies) and the French conglomerate Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux, one of the major supporters of the World Water Forum.

Winning the P32-billion concession for the treatment and distribution of potable water in Metro Manila's west zone over a 25-year period, it took over operations from the MWSS in August 1997.

The west zone covers Manila (except San Andres and Sta. Ana), Pasay, parts of Makati, Quezon City, Parañaque, Caloocan, Muntinlupa and Valenzuela, and the municipalities of Navotas, Malabon and Las Piñas. It is also responsible for water supply in Cavite City and the towns of Bacoor, Imus, Noveleta and Rosario.

(The east zone, on the other hand, was turned over by the MWSS to the Manila Water Company Inc., a consortium of the Ayala Corp., United Utilities and Bechtel Utilities.)

Maynilad's 475,000 water connections service 70 percent of some 7.6 million residents.

Its piping network of 2,534 kilometers extends from Valenzuela to Cavite City, while its treatment capacity totaled 2,500 million liters a day.

In 2000, Maynilad invested at least P3 billion on the replacement of 70 km of pipes and 200,000 water meters, 40,000 additional service connections and 1,000 new valves, among others.

It had planned to invest P30 billion for water projects and P150 billion for sewerage projects between 1997 and 2021.

According to a Maynilad publication, the firm charged a low P6.13 per cubic meter [from the MWSS rate of P8.78] or "savings of P2.65 per cubic meter."

Just last August, the firm reported what it called "gains of privatization"— "more water delivered to customers (from 2,076.22 mld in August 1997 to 2,330 mld in June 2002) and more households served (from 464,644 in 1997 to 603,280 in June last year)."

It also said more than 62,822 needy families had benefited from its "Bayan Tubig" program since February 1999.

BLD charismatic group bears SARS cross in Canada

From page A1

thing in common—they were members of the BLD and had participated in the group's gatherings.

This link to the BLD was announced to the public on Monday.

The April 13 quarantine letter by Toronto Medical Officer Sheela Basrur to the 500 BLD members said: "Failure to comply with these requirements will place at risk not only your own health but also the health of your family, BLD members and possibly others in the broader community."

SARS assessment clinic, the fourth one in Ontario located in the west end of its capital Toronto, is set up by hospital workers wearing full protective clothings. REUTERS

BLD statement

The BLD in Toronto has announced the suspension of all its religious and social gatherings and has enjoined its members in Toronto to follow the quarantine procedures imposed by the Toronto Public Health.

"We recognize that the current situation will require each of us to make sacrifices . . . We are deeply saddened . . . that those quarantined will be unable to take part in parish or BLD activities at Easter . . . As well, there may be financial or other hardships caused by these events, and we must act as the family that we are and support one another to the best of our individual abilities," the BLD said in a statement posted in its website.

"It is part of our commitment to each other in our (BLD) Community and to the larger community throughout Toronto that we do whatever we can, whatever we are required to do, to help stop the spread of a disease that has already damaged so many lives and hurt so many families," the statement added.

According to Canada's The Globe and Mail, most members of the BLD in Toronto are Filipinos who come from all walks of life. Some are doctors and nurses, others are nannies and restaurant workers.

Authorities now have to trace the steps of these 500 people to see if they have infected others at the workplace or in other public areas.

"All the stops have to come out now. We have a short window of opportunity to try to contain this," Donald Low, chief microbiologist at Mount Sinai Hospital, said.

Tracing the infection

The infection among the BLD members was traced by The Globe and Mail:

On March 16, an elderly BLD member went to the Scarborough Grace Hospital with his son for medical treatment. There they came in close contact with a 76-year-old man who a week earlier had shared a room in the hospital with a Chinese-Canadian.

This Chinese-Canadian was Toronto's second SARS fatality. He was infected by his mother who came from Hong Kong. She, in turn, was infected by a medical professor who had treated SARS cases in Guangdong, China where the SARS virus is believed to have originated.

The elderly BLD member, Eulalio Samson (according to a Filipino reporter in Toronto who was interviewed by the INQUIRER), died at the hospital on April 1 but no one knew at the time that he had SARS.

On April 3, several BLD members attended Samson's wake at the Highland Funeral Home. By then other members of the family were allegedly infected with SARS.

Health authorities conducted an autopsy on Samson after his sons and other members of the extended family were found to have SARS.

The Samsons were quarantined for 10 days but one of the sons went to at least two other hospitals showing SARS symptoms after his quarantine had ended. He was sent home because hospital staff did not see a clear link between his symptoms and the outbreak at the Scarborough Grace Hospital.

On April 5, health officials issued a public warning advising those who had been to Highland Funeral Home on April 3 to contact the public health unit and to quarantine themselves.

On April 9, when health officials thought they already had everything under control because those who went to the funeral home had quarantined themselves and the BLD had already cancelled its religious meetings, a healthcare worker called their attention to two baffling cases.

The two, including a 4-year-old child, were BLD members but had not attended the wake.

It was only then that further interviews with BLD leaders were conducted and health officials learned that BLD held a Mass and a retreat on March 28 and 29. They learned that the sons of Samson had attended the gatherings.

Yet even as BLD cancelled its religious meetings, many members had gathered to celebrate the birthday of a member.

This possible exposure led health officials to order on April 13 the quarantine of all BLD members and 100 other people who worked with them in a city office.

A Filipino reporter in Toronto, Gerardine Marie Alcalde, said one of Samson's sons, Ed, is now in the intensive care unit of a hospital.

The doctor who treated the elderly Samson (who had died) had to close his clinic because he, too, was placed under quarantine.

The Globe and Mail reported that the spread of SARS among BLD members has sparked fears in Toronto, with some families thinking twice about hiring Filipino nannies. It quoted Jan Preston, owner of Traditional Nannies, as saying that many families were afraid to interview Filipino nannies.

In Manila, Philippine Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said the DOH was working closely with Canadian health and Filipino consular officials in monitoring the situation in Toronto.

He said they were trying to get a more detailed report from health authorities in Canada to find out how many of the 29 contacts were classified as SARS suspects and how were probable SARS patients.

Toronto's health officials had earlier said that 19 BLD members were suspect cases and 10 were probable cases.

As defined by Canadian authorities, probable cases are people showing symptoms who have recently traveled to Asia or have been in close contact with other SARS patients. Suspect cases show symptoms, but have no travel or contact history. *Reports from Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau, Armand Nocum, AP, AFP*

BLD: A community of close interaction

From page A1

official doctrines and dogmas of the Church.

The community was formed by the Church's Council of Elders (COE) in 1983, to conduct Christian (Marriage, Family, Solo/Single Parent, Singles, and Youth) Encounter and Life in the Spirit Seminars (LSS) and basic "formation" programs.

In essence, BLD's mission was culled from the Apostle Matthew's gospel: "The gift you have received, give as a gift."

Community "shepherds" sent out to find "the sheep who had gone astray" soon established the first districts outside of Manila, in Los Baños, Cebu, Zamboanga, Bulacan, San Pedro, AFP-PNP and Bacolod. Districts were also set up in the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police. By 1993, there were four additional districts—Laoag, Davao, Kabankalan and Lucena.

Father Adorable

BLD's first spiritual director appointed by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' (CBCP) executive council was Fr. Pascual Adorable, S.J. "Father Ado" exhorted the members "not just to pray together but to be a community for others."

Adorable was a pillar of the charismatic renewal movement in the Philippines, and pioneered the Life in the Spirit Seminars and healing services.

When Father Ado died in 1997, he was succeeded by the Most Rev. Angel N. Lagdameo, DD, who holds the post to this day. Lagdameo is the current Archbishop of Jaro, Iloilo, the third largest in the country, with jurisdiction over 181 parishes.

On top of the Christian Encounter and LSS seminars, BLD's "renewed" mission now includes pastoral care and poverty alleviation projects.

The five other local districts are in Baguio, Dumaguete, Jala-jala (Rizal), Lipa and Malolos. The districts abroad, aside from Toronto and Hong Kong, are Vancouver and St. Catharines (Ontario) in Canada; and Los Angeles, Rochester, Cleveland, Detroit/Michigan, Cincinnati, Oakland, Newark, Albany, Long Island, San Francisco, Reno, Phoenix, Seattle and Sacramento in the United States.

HK folk storm heaven with prayers

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worst hit by the mystery virus, which has killed 152 and infected more than 3,500 people in some 30 countries since it first emerged in southern China in November last year.

"In the past, the Goddess also help residents to ward of an epidemic of cholera," said Cheung Pak as he offered a bundle of joss sticks to Tin Hau (Queen of Heaven) at a small temple nestled in the hillside above Causeway Bay.

"I'm afraid of being infected with the disease that's why I'm here," said Cheung as he recalled legends about Tin Hau helping residents a century ago overcome a cholera epidemic.

Tin Hau, whose birthday is observed next week, is one of the most popular goddesses in Hong Kong. Fishermen believe the goddess protects seafarers.

Other worshippers are beating a path to Wong Tai Sin, Hong Kong's most popular Taoist temple, or Pak Tai, on outlying Cheung Chau island.

The temples are popular among worshippers seeking good fortune as well as information about their fortunes.

"I pray to remain safe and sound as Wong Tai Sin makes all wishes come true," said a middle-aged woman who fought her way through crowds to pray to for good health.

"He will help us fight the atypical pneumonia," said the woman who identified herself as Chan Tai.

At the temple dedicated to Che Kong, a series of rites to call for help to dispel the disease will be held by the Federation of Taoists in Hong Kong starting on Thursday.

Che Kong, a well known ancient Chinese militarist, is believed to have helped residents in Hong Kong's New Territories to douse a cholera epidemic.

However, it can be difficult to distinguish the lines between religion, superstition and traditional practices such as fung shui, scholars said.

All three come into play when trying to influence the course of luck and fortune, they said.

Joseph Bosco, a scholar on culture and religion at the Chinese University, said: "With a disease like this, we have no explanations why people are getting sick or dying of it. The most natural way is too seek divine protection.

"With people getting panicky about it, they do anything to calm down, same as in doing yoga, it gives them confidence. It makes sense," he said.

Stephen Sze, a professor of humanities at the City University, said: "It is nothing unusual. It is part of Chinese culture to seek the help of deities.

"It is because they are getting scared of the disease, which shows no signs of being under control. A lot of them believe the disease can be warded off by worshipping their favorite deities," he said.

"Follow-up religious rites will also be held to thank the heavenly gods for their help," when the disease is under control. *AFP*

SARS BRIEFS

RP proposes airport chiefs meet

THE PHILIPPINES has offered to host a meeting among airport officials in the region to prevent the further spread of SARS by travelers.

Edgar Manda, general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority, made the proposal to the President the other day and Ms Macapagal has approved the proposal in principle.

Manda also said Philippine airports will now adopt some tough anti-SARS precautions employed at the Hong Kong and Singapore airports that prohibit travelers and well-wishers from speaking inside elevators and spitting anywhere within the airport premises to prevent the spread of the SARS virus.

"We have asked our security personnel to watch out for people who spit in the airport premises. We are also asking the public to keep themselves from speaking inside the elevators since it is a cramped space," Manda said.

Ms Macapagal urged all arriving passengers to fully cooperate with screening procedures at airports and other ports of entry.

She said that while the government would do "everything within its power and resources to prevent and control an outbreak," citizens also have to do their share. *Norman Bordadora and Dona Pazzibugan*

Japan donates 'protective equipment'

THE JAPAN International Cooperation Agency (Jica) has donated to the Philippines 1,000 disposable "personal protective equipment" made up of disposable gowns, shoe covers and gloves for healthcare workers who take care of SARS patients in the country's 16 regional hospitals.

United Laboratories (Unilab) offered to provide 20 thermo-scan equipment that would enable health workers to get a patient's temperature reading in seconds.

Uniliver has donated disinfecting materials while Johnson & Johnson provided the Department of Health with alcohol. *Armand Nocum*

PAL passengers down 30%

THE PASSENGER load factor for Philippine Airlines (PAL's) international operations fell 30 percent from last year to 66 percent in the first 11 days of April due to the SARS global outbreak, its president Avelino Zapanta said.

But Zapanta said the SARS scare has been double-edged.

"While we are suffering in the region, we are seeing a bit of improvement in the trans-Pacific (flights) because a number of passengers who (used to) fly through Hong Kong and Taipei are now taking PAL's direct non-stop flights," Zapanta said.

Zapanta is not ruling out a reduction of the number of PAL flights to Hong Kong and China, saying it would depend on "developments in the workplace." *AFP*

Coverup in Beijing

A WORLD Health Organization official has estimated that the city of Beijing has 100 to 200 cases of the deadly SARS virus—far more than the 37 publicly reported.

Alan Schnur, head of communicable disease control in WHO's Beijing office, said his figure was based on information gathered from health care workers and other sources and his own knowledge of the Chinese capital's health system.

WHO officials have been very cautious about information they release and have said they would base any announcements on scientific data.

Last Tuesday, WHO experts visited two military hospitals in Beijing as the government responded to pressure to be more open about the deadly outbreak.

WHO spokesperson Jim Palmer said political pressure helped convince Beijing to grant long-elusive permission to visit the army sites, which operate outside the jurisdiction of municipal authorities.

China has accounted for nearly half of the world's cases of SARS. At least 64 people have died and more than 1,430 have been infected in the world's most populous country. *AP, Reuters*

China key to SARS cure

UNITED NATIONS—China's records on SARS are key to knowing whether the new pneumonia will become a persistent infectious disease such as malaria or tuberculosis, a World Health Organization expert said.

"The jury is still out on whether this will continue to occur, and that depends a lot on understanding what is going on in China," said Dr. David Heymann. *AFP*

3 babies born in HK show signs of SARS

From page A1

ciated Press.

All three tested negative for the coronavirus that is believed to cause SARS, but Hon said they "increasingly resembled" SARS cases. It is possible the premature births also made them susceptible to health problems, he said.

Two babies have a fever, which is common in SARS patients, said Hon, who teaches at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and has been monitoring the babies.

One of the mothers, a 34-year-old, was among nine people whose deaths were reported on Tuesday, Hong Kong's biggest one-day total yet.

The other two mothers are still alive. Hon said he had no information on their conditions, but he said they were young.

The baby, whose mother succumbed to SARS, was born on April 1, according to a statement from the Princess Margaret Hospital. There was no information on the baby's gender or condition, but a hospital spokesperson said the baby has been transferred to another hospital.

The mother was admitted to Princess Margaret on March 26 with symptoms of SARS that quickly worsened. She was placed in intensive care on March 30.

She died on Monday, but her death was not reported until Tuesday when Hong Kong gave its latest daily update on SARS statistics.

The Chinese-language daily Ming Pao reported that the father had just recovered from SARS and that the family had lived in Amoy Gardens, a hard-hit apartment complex that has seen some 300 cases of the flu-like illness.

The mother had not reached full term but her condition had gotten so bad doctors decided it was best to go ahead with the birth, the newspaper said, quoting a medical worker from Princess Margaret.

Moms took antivirals

All three mothers were taking the antiviral drug ribavirin, Hon said, and doctors had been worried about its side effects on unborn children.

TEMPERATURE of all passengers departing from SARS-battered Hong Kong is checked by a staff member of HK's international airport. If it is above 38.2 °C, they are not allowed to fly. This is another precaution to contain the spread of the mysterious virus. GETTY IMAGES

Hong Kong doctors have been treating many SARS patients with a combination of ribavirin and steroids, a combination that they called effective in many cases.

Meanwhile, some Hong Kong companies have requested pregnant employees take paid or unpaid leave, or work from home as the SARS epidemic worsens.

Wendy Hui, a media executive who is seven months pregnant, has been "ordered" by her company to work from home.

"I don't feel that concerned. Even if you're at home you can still contract SARS. In fact I want to go to work but nobody will let me. I hardly go out apart from weekends and send reports via e-mail from home," she said.

Taking precautions

"This is the first time I have been confined to my home. It's been like this for weeks now. But it's so boring. I feel like I have been quarantined."

Other pregnant women have started taking precautions against SARS infection.

Winnie Liu, who is five months pregnant, said she had resigned from her job as a shop assistant two weeks ago "because my husband begged me to give up."

"At the time, I was furious. I told him he was over-reacting. But after a row I agreed . . . and the situation has gotten so serious recently and that pregnant woman dying really made me think it was right to quit," she said.

"I have been taking loads of vitamins and Chinese medicine to try to protect myself against the disease," said Liu. "My husband does all the shopping and I rarely go out now except to go to the clinic."

Mavis Tsui, a pregnant Hong Kong mother-of-two, admits she is terrified of becoming the next victim of the killer SARS virus.

Tsui, who tends to a roadside fruit store, is thinking of hiring extra help so she doesn't have to spend long hours there.

"I've been working long hours because business was good. People are eating lots of fruits to help them fight off SARS. But I think that my health is worth more than money now," said Tsui.

"When I heard of the pregnant mother dying yesterday, I was at first shocked and then scared to death . . . It's getting hotter now. I can't wear this mask all the time. Perhaps its time to find some help. I have two daughters but this will be my first son. I just don't think I will take the risk anymore," she added.

SARS has sickened 1,232 people in Hong Kong and has killed at least 56. *AP, AFP*

Eugenia D. Apostol
Founding Chairman

INQUIRER

Vol. 18 No. 130
ISSN
0116-2642

OPINION

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph **website:** http://www.inq7.net

The Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 /
528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

Publisher **Isagani Yambot**
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Priests and journalists

EDITORIAL

THIS month, the Boston Globe won one of journalism's highest honors, the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service. The newspaper was cited for its "courageous, comprehensive coverage" of sexual abuse by Roman Catholic priests, coverage which the Pulitzer judges said "pierced secrecy, stirred local, national, and international reaction, and produced changes" in the world's biggest church.

Media critics—those whose job as journalists is to cover other journalists—have welcomed the award as an industry milestone on almost the same level as the Pentagon Papers, for which the New York Times received the Pulitzer for meritorious public service in 1972, and the Watergate exposé, for which the Washington Post won the same prize in 1973.

This is heady praise. The media critics based their reaction on the worldwide impact the Boston Globe's stories had created, not only on the Roman Catholic church, but on journalism itself. The award for the publication of the Pentagon Papers—a secret government-written history of the increasingly complicated American involvement in Vietnam—was a vindication of the public's right to know, even in national security matters. The award for the Watergate stories, which led of course to Richard Nixon becoming the only American president ever to resign from office, was a triumph of enterprise reporting and editorial skepticism over official mendacity. Both led to major changes in American politics and the practice of journalism.

The Boston Globe's reporting on priestly sexual abuse led, in 2002 alone, to the passage of at least two new Massachusetts laws, the firing of 25 priests in the Boston archdiocese and some 450 priests in the United States, and the discovery of hundreds of similar sexual abuse cases in other countries. It led to the resignation, last December, of Bernard Cardinal Law, the powerful Archbishop of Boston. It also led to a greater resolve on the part of the media to write about religion with less deference and with a greater sense of accountability.

"One of the unfortunate by-products of the neglect of religion has been to let religion off the hook sometimes," Charles Haynes, co-author of "Religion in American Public Life," told the Boston Globe. "There may have been some kid-glove treatment."

Now those kid gloves are off, and we think the Roman Catholic as well as other churches, in the United States as well as in the Philippines and other countries, are the better for it. By and large, the reason lies in today's rites.

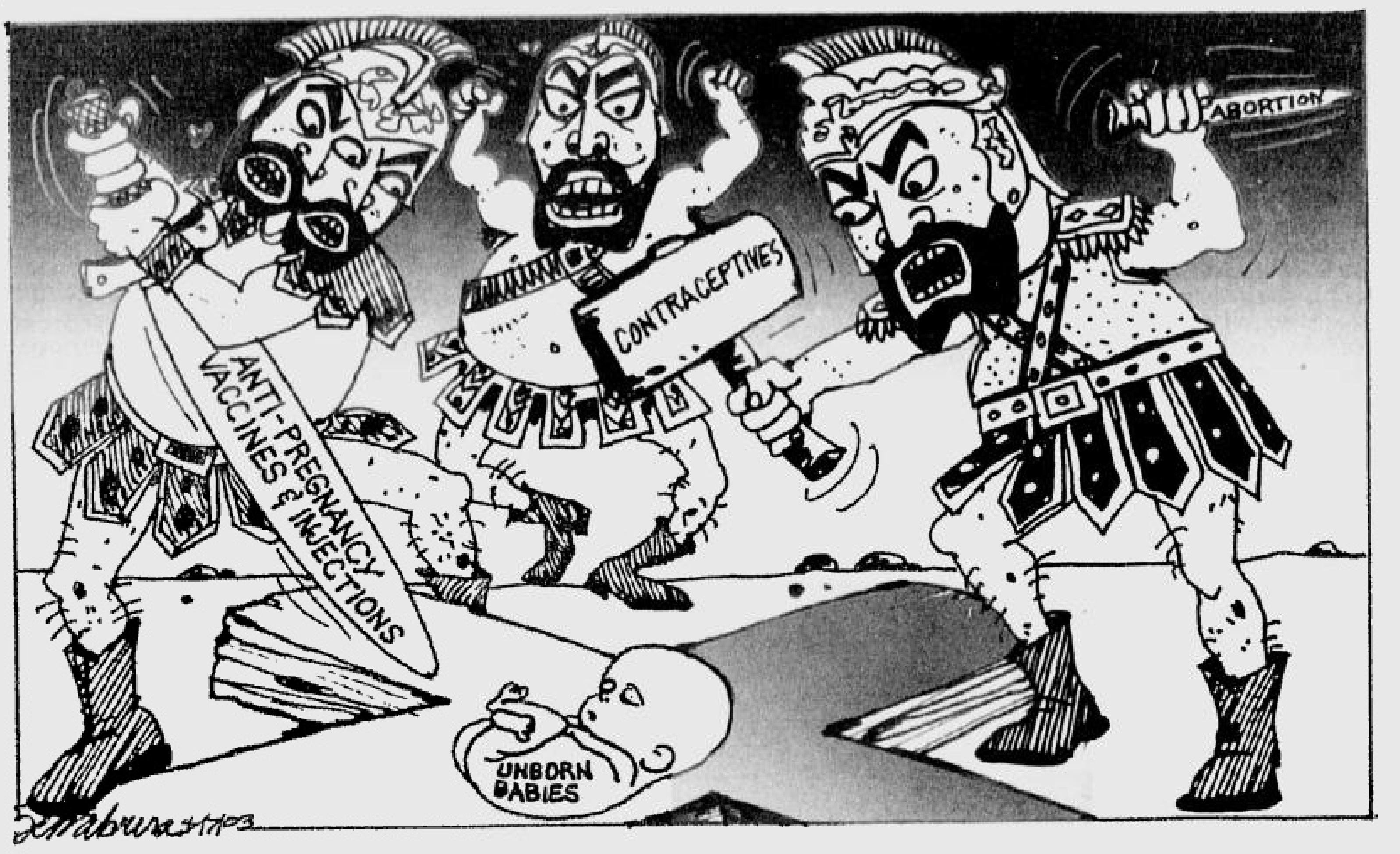
Today, Christians observe Holy Thursday, one of the three holiest days in the Christian calendar. The commemoration of the Last Supper reminds the faithful that the start of the Easter Triduum is the anniversary of the Mass—it is the day the Eucharist became, in the words of the catechism, the visible sign of an invisible grace. But today is also the anniversary of the Christian priesthood. Those quaint rites where the celebrant of the Mass washes the feet of the apostles is actually a reenactment of the original ordination.

There is no lower task in desert communities than the washing of a traveler's feet. (By the same token, and as we have learned from the fall of Baghdad, there is no greater insult in those same communities than slapping an enemy's face with a dust-encrusted slipper.) In unmistakable terms, therefore, the Christian priesthood was conceived as the exact opposite of more ancient forms of priesthood: service characterized it, not privilege and secrecy.

It bears repeating that the great majority of priests continue to bear faithful witness to their vocation. But the sexual abuses committed by some priests have been committed—have in fact been made possible and continue to thrive—precisely in that ancient atmosphere of privilege and secrecy.

"We're just beginning to come to grips with the fact that this is corruption and it is, in fact, systemic. In the countries where it is being dealt with openly, the church will come to health more quickly," said Tom Roberts, editor of the US-based National Catholic Reporter.

In other words, the cure for the scandal lies in openness, in a return to the transparency of service. Journalists without kid gloves can help in that journey.



Are we a nation of masochists?

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

TOMORROW, Good Friday, blood will again flow in many parts of the Philippines as scores of flagellants whip themselves bloody and some even have themselves nailed to the cross. In fact, crucifixion and flagellation are becoming epidemic. In Barangay San Pedro Cutud in Pampanga, at least 12 penitents will be nailed to the cross tomorrow and some 500 flagellants will flog themselves silly as thousands of foreign and local tourist gawk at them. Lesser crucifixions and flagellation will take place in other parts of the country such as Cainta in Rizal and Navotas in Metro Manila.

All the blood that flows from penitents on just one day of the year would be enough to supply the needs of the Red Cross blood bank for a month. That would help those who need blood, too, and would undoubtedly please Christ more, but donating blood to the blood bank is not as dramatic as crucifixion and flagellation and does not attract tourists. And you are not immortalized in the newspapers and television. In Pampanga recently, I saw a scrapbook of a penitent with newspaper clippings of himself painstakingly preserved between plastic covers. On the wall of his house was a framed photograph of himself nailed to the cross. In this man's house, the photographs and clippings of his brief moments of fame have replaced the framed diplomas and scrapbooks of school mementos that are commonplace in most Filipino homes.

I think that penitents, especially those who are nailed to the cross repeatedly, are, deep in their hearts, exhibitionists. They want people to gawk at them. They have the same yearning as the star-struck sex kittens shedding their clothes and baring all in order to attract attention and eventually become stars in show biz. Like them, the penitents also want their place in the sun.

And attention and plenty of sun they do get as they percolate in the heat of the midday sun of Good Friday while thousands of sadistic tourists who like to see blood and violence watch them.

The tourists flock to these exhibitions not to appreciate the Philippine scenery as most tourists do, but to see something weird and strange, something bizarre. These are most likely the same tourists with the strange fascination for mummies, trekking up the Cordillera mountains just to see—and inevitably—smell them.

Why do the masochistic penitents do this? Ask them and they reply that it is to atone for their sins, to fulfill a *panata* (vow), to thank God for a favor, such as the healing of a sick relative, or to ask Him for a favor, such as a job in the Middle East, or perhaps to win the lotto.

They believe that if they break their vows, God would be angry and bad luck would descend on them and their families. Thus, they are hooked to their *panatas* for the rest of their lives. And sometimes, their descendants, too.

The penitents are not only growing in number, they are also getting younger. In Barangay San Pedro Cutud, three teenagers will join the procession of flagellants tomorrow. In the same place one Good Friday, a woman penitent was nailed to the cross. Foreigners too, are joining the masochistic orgy. In 1996, a Japanese had himself crucified.

Some town fathers—and perhaps the Department of Tourism too—encourage the bizarre ritual because they attract tourists and bring their barangay fame (notoriety) plus tourist dollars. The Catholic Church is on the record as frowning on the practice but that is as far as it goes. Priests don't deliver sermons against it nor talk to the penitents themselves to educate and discourage them from the practice.

They can tell the penitents that there are many other ways to atone for their sins, or to thank God for favors given, or to make vows that would please Him more in exchange for favors asked, but the priests rarely do that.

In fact, the practice could have been brought here from Mexico through intense religiosity brought on by the Church in the first place. The rituals during Holy Week reliving the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ were engendered by the Church in the belief that dwelling on Christ's suffering to save mankind would make the people walk the straight and narrow. The penitents were only imitating the suffering of Christ in the belief that the more they suffer the more kindly will He look on them and reward them.

But this has not lessened one bit the number of criminals and crooks of all types, high and low, in the Philippines. On the contrary, the number of crooks, especially in the government, seems to increase in direct proportion to the increase in the number of penitents every year. Perhaps this is because of the wrong belief that if you flagellate yourself or are nailed to the cross on Good Friday, all your sins for the rest of the year are forgiven and you can start to sin again with a clean slate.

Worse, the rituals only project us to the world as a nation of masochists.

Like the Church, the government is not discouraging the barbaric rituals either. Anything that attracts tourists, like the tribesmen dancing around in G-strings, and guided tours to the mummy caves of the Cordilleras, are welcome.

We are selling our country to the world's tourists in the same way that "darkest Africa" was sold to the Western world in the old days: that we are a primitive and backward country with quaint and strange rituals.

Empires

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

JESUS Christ's name has been used by the powerful to entomb a great deal of the world's population and bring those who survive into the fold. It was used by the various popes at the start of the second millennia to slaughter the Saracens during the Crusades, which lasted several centuries. It was used by the kings of Europe during the second half of the second millennia to bring the world to its knees and put chains around its legs and arms, a process that came to be known as colonialism, which also lasted for centuries. It is currently being used by George W. Bush and his coterie in Washington to justify a modern version of White Man's Burden, which entails putting the fear of God in a world that refuses to worship at its feet, an enterprise that hopefully will *not* last centuries.

But who was Jesus Christ? How could his name possibly have been invoked to sanction these things?

First off, he was not a white man, he was "colored folk," as the slave owners of the American South referred to his kind. He did not have an aquiline nose, like the popes. He did not have blond hair and blue eyes, like the kings of Europe. He did not have white skin like the president of the United States and his coterie in Washington. He was a Jew, born in the pit of what is now called the Holy Land, a land that also birthed Mohammad, whom Muslims believe was the greatest prophet of all, diviner of things, messenger of Allah.

Christ had features like any typical Jew or Arab, dark skin and dark eyes, disheveled hair that fell to his shoulders, an unshaven face. Certainly, he did not look like Jeffrey Hunter or any of the Hollywood stars who have since come to portray him. Well, he might have looked like Willem Dafoe in "The Last Temptation of Christ," but that's another story. When he was born, there was no snow to inspire anyone to sing "White Christmas." Though it was bitter cold, the desert winds coughing wintry chill. Christ's wanderings in the desert would have made his skin even darker and rougher. His hands, already callused by learning his father's trade before he went into "public life" would have become more so over the years. Not to speak of his feet from all that walking.

That brings me to the second thing. Jesus Christ was not born into royalty, into a family that could presume to rule the world as a matter of birthright. His father was a carpenter, though Joseph's paternity would always be suspect, and his mother was an urban poor housewife. They did their best to keep body and soul together in the slums of Jerusalem until Christ set out on his own. Christ's retinue—his apostles and disciples—and audience were as impoverished as he was. They were fishermen, carpenters, artisans, rabble rousers, itinerant vendors, drifters, hustlers, whores. Mary Magdalene was the most famous of the last, though her relationship to Christ has been a subject of much debate, the more pious refusing to admit any intimate possibilities. One way to look at it is that Christ did not walk the streets of Makati and did not talk to the executives there, he walked the streets of Quiapo and talked to the derelicts there.

Naturally, the religious leaders of his time, the Pharisees, who deemed themselves Jehovah's designates, were resentful of his success. One way to look at it as well is Jaime Cardinal Sin and the other Catholic clergy being resentful of El Shaddai's success with the rabble. Though I admit it is monumentally heretical to suggest even remotely that Mike Velarde resembles Christ in any way. At the very least, the differences lie in the miracles they performed. Christ turned water into wine. Velarde turned faith into cash. Christ made the blind see, the lame walk, the dead live again. Velarde made the seeing blind, the healthy lame and the living dead again. But that is another story.

The point simply is: Christ never saw the world from the eyes of the rich and powerful, he saw the world from the eyes of the poor and weak. How he could be invoked later by conquerors to justify their conquests, that is a miracle of the kind Velarde performs.

That brings me to the last thing: Jesus Christ did not belong to the race of the conquerors, he belonged to the race of the conquered. The place he lived in was an outpost of the Roman empire, administered for Caesar by local Jewish officials, civil and religious. Not unlike the local governments in the colonized countries in the second half of the second millennia, up until World War II. Not unlike the government of Afghanistan and the one being manufactured in Iraq today. Not unlike the Philippine government to this very day, administered by locals for the American Caesar.

Christ's world was one where to speak one's truth was to be called a subversive. Or where to speak anything other than what was officially sanctioned by Rome was to court death. That was how Christ ended up on the sala of Herod and Pontius Pilate, charged with being anti-Roman by the Pharisees and their lackeys. That was how he ended up nailed to the cross on a hill, charged with subverting Roman rule by preaching things that deviated from the prevailing set of beliefs, which therefore challenged the prevailing order of things. When all Christ preached was that the hardest thing to conquer was not a distant land, it was one's heart. The greatest challenge was not waging war, it was waging peace. The greatest victory was not wreaked by fire and sword, it was wrought by love and compassion.

Ironically, it would prove to be the most truly subversive thing of all. An idea so powerful it would outlive the most powerful empire at that time and persist to this day. The truth is: Empires crumble, truth does not.

Something to think about in these holiest of days.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@info.com.ph

Sisters give poor students fighting chance

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS expected, Sen. Panfilo Lacson has filed his motion asking the Supreme Court to reconsider its April 1 ruling that ordered the Quezon City RTC Branch 81 to reopen the 11 multiple-murder Kuratong Baleleng (KB)cases that implicated the former PNP official and other accused. In a 99-page motion, the senator claimed that the high court's revival of the cases against him is clearly "political persecution," thus invoking the argument of Justice Angelita Sandoval-Gutierrez, one of four dissenters in the SC decision.

* * *

Interestingly, Lacson asked the ponente himself, Justice Romeo Callejo, to inhibit himself, citing how he had earlier inhibited himself in the KB deliberations of the Court of Appeals in 2001, of which he was then a member. In the CA Callejo argued that his nephew-in-law, PNP intelligence officer Jaime Caringal, had been involved in the investigation of the KB cases. But at the SC, Callejo told his colleagues that after checking out its records, he realized Caringal had no part in the KB investigation. As a result, he felt no need to inhibit himself in the SC's deliberations; and as former Senate President Jovito Salonga noted in Kilosbayan magazine, not one of his colleagues even hinted of the need for him to inhibit himself from the KB cases.

* * *

But Lacson's lawyers seem bent on disqualifying Callejo by all means. Media reports say that Lacson's camp has recruited lawyer Gilbert Santos in addition to help chief counsel Philip Sigfried Fortun, but sources say there is another counsel just recruited whose name still has not surfaced, but who happens to be a very good friend of Callejo. The idea of recruiting this counsel seems to be to pressure Callejo to stay out of the case because they are close friends.

The move is not without precedent. During the trial of Ninoy Aquino in the Marcos years for being "underage" as senator, he was ably represented by a battery of high-caliber lawyers led by bar topnotcher Salonga. But Justice Arsenio Dizon, who was related to Ninoy Aquino, had to disqualify himself from the deliberations. To "get even" with the prosecution and balance the loss of Dizon, Ninoy's lawyers recruited Norberto Quisumbing, who happened to be the brother-in-law of then Associate Justice Enrique Fernando, who was close to Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos and who later served as Marcos' chief justice. Fernando had to inhibit himself, in accordance with SC practice about family relationships.

* * *

All these moves can be considered part of the "tricks" of the legal profession, but I don't see why Callejo has to inhibit himself on the Lacson motion just because his close friend is defending the senator. It is quite natural for close friends to have even violent differences of opinion. Moreover, the former San Beda law professor has a staunch reputation for integrity and independent-mindedness. But even assuming he gets disqualified, it is doubtful if the other nine SC justices who voted to reopen the KB cases would change their positions.

* * *

To stay sane in the midst of all the problems around us, I follow music whenever I have a chance, and over the past few days I had the good fortune of listening to the performance of a world-class German cellist named Claus Kanngiesser, who is also the deputy director of the largest and best-known music school in Europe, the Musikhochschule in Cologne. He performed solo and with 11 young Filipino cellists at the newly renovated St.Cecilia's Hall of St. Scholastica's College, and then with Filipino pianist Raul Sunico, the new dean of the UST Conservatory of Music, at one of those soirees for which German Ambassador Herbert Jess' residence is getting famous for.

All these thanks to my friend from the Old Holy Ghost College and UP, the former Aida Zita, who married a nice German guy named Dieter Reichert. Aida and Dieter share a friendship with Claus dating from their New York City stay in the late '60s, when Claus studied at the famed Juilliard School of Music and Aida and Dieter did graduate work at Columbia University. Claus became the godfather of Dieters' son and over the years he has been to Manila three times, conducting music clinics here.

* * *

But perhaps more meaningful for me was Kanngieser's inspired playing last Saturday before some 2,800 highly appreciative students of "Girlstown," a high school for girls from very poor families in Bacood, Sta. Mesa, Manila run by the Sisters of Mary. The Reicherts, who are very involved with the school on a volunteer basis, coaxed me to see for myself how these low-profile nuns from the order founded by the late Msgr. Aloysius Schwartz are helping, in Dieter's words, "to alleviate the effects of a life of poverty particularly on the most important segment—the youth." The sisters run two girls' schools in Manila and Talisay, Cebu and two boys' schools in Cavite and Minglanilla, Cebu. Their emphasis is on academics and vocational training in various skills as well as values formation, but in addition they also provide board and lodging.

* * *

Watching the young girls relish Kanngieser's playing I thought, how awfully lucky they are to be given a fighting chance in their future. By some uncanny coincidence, the following afternoon, I was doing my regular constitutional walk on the UP campus in Diliman and I ran into four young girls about the same age as the Bacood girls, but looking very grimy. They were sniffing on small paper bags which I knew contained rugby and I confronted them about it, which they did not deny. I asked why they were resorting to rugby, knowing it was bad for their health; they said it helped them forget their problems. I walked away feeling helpless and dejected, thinking, if only all the rugby-sniffing young girls could fall under the Sisters of Mary's wings, what a better world this would be.

The art of waiting

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

BECAUSE we came late for a doctor's appointment, we were pushed to the back of the line and we had more than an hour to "kill."

During that time, I first thumbed through a newspaper, reading even the usually boring business news. But when this lost its appeal, I remembered the "project." I've been planning our silver anniversary for months now, and even though it's not until December, I've imagined and re-imagined it in my head. Now, with an hour of "empty" time on my hands, I decided to put down some of my thoughts on paper—or rather, in digital form.

I whipped out my PDA and portable keyboard and proceeded to prepare the text for our invitation, reception card and tokens. I was also able to plan the format for a planned "Book of Memories" which we will give away to guests. It was almost with regret that I heard a nurse call us, for I was so deep into the project, I was ready to tackle even a proposed budget!

As Sarah Ban Breathnach, well known as the author of "Simple Abundance," writes: "It's the little moments that are so maddening. The ones we aren't even supposed to notice we're wasting." Life has become so hectic, true, but strewn about those hectic days are little parcels of time that require us to wait...and wait...and wait...and stew with impatience as we watch the second hand fleet by.

Waiting is truly an art, an art that requires the productive use of otherwise wasted time that comes in short bursts. Still, one can come up with ways of whiling time away that not only distract and entertain one, but even enrich and reward.

Here are some suggestions for "creative waiting" from Breathnach in her book "Romancing the Ordinary: A Year of Simple Splendor."

* * *

THE TRICK in transforming waiting into life's extra recess opportunities is to prearrange activities that can be accomplished or enjoyed in short takes...things that, in fact, you might not even think to do had you more time at your disposal.

Consider the investment of a small cassette player with an ear-phone... Don't play familiar favorites, but use the device to explore new sounds that you will truly attend to: audiotapes of poetry; lively, fun and new-to-you music (Calypso, folk songs, '30s jazz); soothing Gregorian chants or Elizabethan lute songs. Or how about the sound track to your favorite movie? "Screen" the scenes in your inner eye wherever you are.

Carry a small artist's sketchbook and slender, pocket-size color markers and draw yourself a diary of your thoughts, feelings, surroundings. No artist would go out of the house without one because inspiration is everywhere.

Take up a portable, easily stop-and-start craft such as tatting or crocheting. In (a few) days, you could create a fine lace edging for lingerie, a T-shirt, or a pillowcase, with simply a ball of cotton string.

Organize what has probably been wasting your time for too long: fill in a new address book that has spaces for all those e-mail addresses, fax numbers and office versus home number and transfer into it all those marginal, scribbled updates from your old book, one section at a time. You might even go over the top and include the names of spouses or significant others, children, pets, birthdays. You'd never take the time to do this, so take advantage of the opportunity.

* * *

TOO early for an appointment? Stop at a card store and read the funny greeting cards. Anticipate coming occasions: instead of buying those cards in a rush when the dates are upon you, look for just the right images and messages and get them NOW. Add a "stickie" to each card purchased, to remind you of the intended recipient, and clip them to your calendar when you get home.

For sit-down waiting interludes, teach yourself origami, via a pack of paper and a softbound instruction book. Offer the other people in your waiting area your finished figures with a smile. (Wouldn't it be magical to see the entire roomful of people become absorbed in folding a paper menagerie—like a scene out of a French film—all the more enchanting if it's a room full of grown-ups!)

Discover the joy of short stories and essay compilations—each so absorbing, so satisfying, and complete in but a few pages. Go for the exotic,—cultures that aren't your own—and erotic classics, such as Sir Richard Burton's grown-up, unexpurgated "A Thousand and One Nights" or Anais Nin's "Delta of Venus."

* * *

FOR LAUNDROMAT reading take along some offbeat classic, say "The Scarlet Pimpernel," or Samuel Beckett's play "Waiting for Godot." And try on for size being an intellectual. Carry a book of truly evocative poetry that sets you pondering while you're pausing: Yeats, Whitman, Neruda, Tagore, Dickinson, Eluard. Allow yourself to be transported, a single poem at a time, into the mysterious cavern of your own longings. Then memorize a verse and enjoy spicing up staid dinner-party conversation when it just rolls so effortlessly off your tongue...

Learn to play solitaire—not the computer game, but the real thing, with cards. Little surprise that the British name for this old game is Patience.

Pretend you're a famous person, incognito. Keep a pair of outrageous dark sunglasses or ones with wild vintage frames in your purse for just such boring moments. Feel mysterious, inscrutable. See if, without actually doing anything, you can will others to look at you wonderingly, wondrously. See if you can set them thinking: How come she looks so calm, so contented? What's her secret?

Probably because she knows how to cool her heels with panache. Now, so do you. And trust me, all these minute diversions work like a charm. I should know; I thought them up while waiting, of course.

The inner light

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

TODAY, Holy Thursday, as war rages, this little corner shifts gears.

Since ancient times, peoples and nations have been waging war against their kind, invoking the name of their God, killing and dying in the name of their God. Plundering, pillaging, destroying, seeking revenge in the name of their God.

Was this really in the name of God? Or in the name of religion?

And yet, since ancient times, sages and saints, mystics and martyrs from different cultures and walks of life have had one common deep experience of God. In deepest prayer, in stillness and in silence God comes, breaking the barriers of culture, religion and geography to enter the landscape of the soul. This God with many names, as many privileged souls have experienced, comes as **light**.

In "Unbounded Light: The Inward Journey" (William E. Williams, editor) are 15 accounts about the inner light culled from ancient scriptures, first-person accounts and modern science.

There are many names for the inner light—*Vergo, Param Prakash, Dvya Jyoti, Amitabha, Noor-e-Ilahi, Shekina, Chandma*. Is this light merely a religious metaphor or is it real as real can be? Simple seekers, saints, sages and mystics throughout history from a diversity of cultures, ages, languages and perspectives plus the corroborative evidence of modern science reveal that it is a very real experience—of God.

Here are experiences of those who have come face to face with, touched, felt, seen, tasted the **Light** that defies understanding.

"My body became immovably rooted; breath was drawn out of my lungs as if by some huge magnet. Soul and mind instantly lost their physical bondage and streamed out like a fluid piercing **light** from my every pore. The flesh was as though dead, yet in my intense awareness I knew that never before had I been fully alive."—Paramahansa Yogananda, "Autobiography of a Yogi."

"If I were to spend years and years imagining how to invent anything so beautiful, I could not do it...it exceeds all that we can imagine. It is not a **radiance** which dazzles, but a soft whiteness and an infused radiance."—St. Teresa of Avila

"What would the universe look like riding on a beam of **light**?...(For Einstein, this inquiry was at once spiritual and scientific. He would later assert) I maintain that the cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest motive for scientific research."—Albert Einstein

"In this **light** my spirit suddenly saw through all, and in and by all, the creatures; even herbs and grass it knew God, who he is and how he is and what his will is. And suddenly in that **light** my will was set on by a mighty impulse to describe the Being of God."—Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), shoemaker, mystic

"There is an ascent of the soul toward the Divine **Light**, therefore shall your heart and soul in the end attain to union with that **Light**. The heart is the dwelling place of that which is the Essence of the universe...the very Essence of God. Tear aside the veils of all you see in this world and you will find yourself apart in solitude with God, you will see that all is one with the Essence of your pure soul."—Farid al-Din Attar (1142-1220)

"I saw into that which was without end, things which cannot be uttered, and of the greatness and infinitude of the love of God, which cannot be expressed by words...This I saw in the pure openings of the **Light** without the help of any man."—George Fox (1624-1691), founder of the Quakers

"A wondrous delight and most pleasant **illumination** beyond all comprehension."—Rabbi Isaan Eisik (1806-1874)

"Within the domain of our mind there is a Buddha of enlightenment who sends forth a powerful **light**."—the Sutra of Hui-neng

"I entered into the innermost part of myself...and I saw...above the same eye of my soul, above my mind, the **light** unchangeable...He who knows that **light** knows eternity...You flashed, you shone, you scattered my blindness: you breathed perfume, and I drew in my breath and I pant for you; I tasted and I am hungry and thirsty; you touched me and I burned for your peace."—Saint Augustine of Hippo

"It is the nature of matter itself, of pure primordial substance. Substance dissolves into **light**...It is the literal and exact truth. We are composed of incipient radiance."—George Greenstein, "The Symbiotic Universe"

"And God created **Light**."—the Bible

"This is the only method to bridge the gulf at present yawning between science and religion, between warring political ambitions and ideologies, between religious faiths, race, nations, classes and finally between men. This is the **immortal light**, held aloft by nature from time immemorial to guide the faltering footsteps of erring humanity across the winding path of evolution, the light which shone in the prophets and sages of antiquity, which continues to shine in the men of genius and seers today, and will continue to shine for all eternity."—Gopi Krishna "Kundalini, the Evolutionary Energy in Man"

"The divine experience comes with a natural inevitability to the sincere devotee...The Lord as the Cosmic Vision is drawn by that magnetic ardor into the seeker's range of consciousness. Long concentration on the liberating spiritual eye...destroys all delusions concerning matter and its gravitational weight; (the seeker) sees the universe as the Lord created it: an essentially undifferentiated mass of **light**. Prepare to absorb the liberating shock of omnipresence."—Yogananda

What is your own experience of the **Light**?

Here I add Rabindranath Tagore's god-experience as expressed in his immortal "Gitanjali": "I have tasted of the hidden honey of this lotus that expands on the ocean of light..."

Advance Easter greetings. *Lumen Christi!*

Scent of the Nazarene

YOUNG BLOOD

Iris Sheila G. Crisostomo

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I LIKE scents. I feel good whenever I smell good. I think I inherited this penchant for scent from my father who is a Don when it comes to eau de cologne, eau de toilette, eau de parfum and even simple after-shaves.

Even on an ordinary day in the house, he likes to catch our attention by splashing on perfume and walking hurriedly past—his scent strongly trailing behind him. The smell of musk and wood and spices would linger in the air and remain there for a few seconds until our noses finally get numb.

A lawyer by profession, my father served as chief parole officer in the Board of Pardons and Parole of the Department of Justice before retiring from government service in 1999.

I admire my father for his innate goodness and deep faith in God. His deep faith in God made me look up to him as a sturdy anchor in times of trials and difficulties. He keeps a regular prayer time, reads the Bible every night and participates actively as a member of Couples for Christ, together with my mother.

His fondness for religious items also speaks of his spirituality. He has a collection of small crosses and religious pendants dangling on silver chains. He also has a good number of rosaries and rosary rings made of wood, metal, seed or plastic.

Religious as he is and impeccable as his taste in perfume may be, I always treasure my father's opinion on things, until one day as I was preparing to leave the house, I sprayed on this new cologne I bought from the department store. Scurrying around the house for last-minute preparations, I jumped past my father who stopped on his heels, taking notice of the new olfactory sensation that reached his nose.

"What's the new perfume?" he asked.

"*Mabango ba* (Does it smell good)?" I asked.

"*Amoy* Nazareno *ka* (You smell like the Nazarene)," he replied.

I was stunned upon hearing that. Immediately, the image of the Black Nazarene of Quiapo flashed in my mind and I imagined myself wearing the same velvety cloak while carrying a large wooden cross. I didn't know if I should feel flattered or insulted. Do I smell old and dusty like a religious *santo* or do I exude a scent so heavenly it reminded him of a religious icon like the Nazarene, or was it a smell synonymous to goodness or sacredness perhaps? I could be jumping with joy for my father thinking that I am on the road to holiness or sainthood. Remember the incorruptible bodies of saints (St. Therese of Liseux, St. Jean Marie Vianey, St. Bernadette of Lourdes, St. Catherine of Laboure, etc.) on whom the natural law of decomposition appears to have been held back and whose physical bodies were preserved and devoid of any smell of putrefaction? Could I be smelling the same way?

I failed to plumb the real meaning of his words until the day he, together with my mother, left for the United States as immigrants. Today, I still use the same cologne. And whenever I smell it, it reminds me of that funny remark made by my father.

"*Amoy* Nazareno *ka*."

And while the strong sweet scent overwhelms me with fond memories of the past, the mystery of what he really meant lingers like perfume that refuses to be blown away.

Iris Sheila G. Crisostomo, 27, is a writer at the Philamlife Insurance Co.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO . . .?

Urban Bank officers' case

THE PRESIDENT of the closed Urban Bank, Teodoro Borlongan, together with his senior vice president Nida Santos, vice president Cecilia Magugat, assistant vice president Rene Colin Gray and bank teller Marie Cecille Lopez were charged with estafa through falsification of commercial documents before the Makati Regional Trial Court on Oct. 3, 2002. Branch 64 Judge Delia Panganiban was assigned to handle the case.

The case came from a complaint filed by Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas officials accusing the aforementioned officers of withdrawing P5 million in deposits without the authority and knowledge of the depositors, former San Miguel Corp. president Francisco Eizmendi and his wife Aurora. The transaction involved a check which was allegedly encashed on April 26, 2000, but it was made to appear in bank records that it was done on April 25 or on the day the bank declared a bank holiday.

Urban Bank shut down its operations following weeks of heavy withdrawal caused by reports that its affiliate, Urbancorp Investments Inc., was about to go down. The bank ran out of cash after its management used the bulk of Urban's money in a matter of few weeks to buy loan papers of Urbancorp.

The accused voluntarily surrendered on Oct. 4, 2002 and each posted a P40,000 bail bond. They filed a motion for judicial determination of probable cause on Oct. 14 with prayer to dismiss the case.

On Nov. 15, Borlongan moved to transfer the case to RTC Branch 133 Judge Napoleon Inoturan contending that a similar case was filed against him with the said branch. Borlongan was referring to an earlier case filed against him, but which had been dismissed on July 26, 2002, even before he was arraigned.

Without resolving the Oct. 14 motion, Panganiban granted the transfer of the case on Dec. 16. She said Inoturan is "better placed to appreciate the case and determine whether or not, with the amendments now instituted in the present information, there is probable cause to hold all accused for trial."

On Dec. 23, Branch 133 received the case records. But Inoturan suspended the proceeding on Jan. 3, 2003, through a motion by the prosecution which cited the unresolved Oct. 14 motion before Panganiban. On Jan. 17, the prosecution also filed a motion seeking Panganiban's reconsideration regarding her order transferring the case to Inoturan.

Considering these two pending motions, Inoturan ordered the return of the case records to Panganiban to facilitate the resolution of the pending motions.

Case status: Panganiban is set to decide on the motion of the accused. Meanwhile, the accused have yet to be arraigned. *Armin Adina, PDI Research Department*

REUTERS

Now they must leave Iraq

THE DEATH toll and destruction suffered by Iraq at the hands of the United States and the United Kingdom greatly pale in comparison to what it suffered during the years of controlled isolation imposed by the West after the Gulf War. Because of non-availability of needed medicines, 5,000 children below 5 years old died monthly, and a total of 1,800,000 Iraqis perished from 1991 to 2002. Because of the imposed oil for food international trading, its gross national product of $3,416 in 1984 was down to $450 in 1995, causing 5 million professional and skilled Iraqis to leave and work in other countries.

The only point for jubilation over the speed with in which Saddam Hussein has been taken out of the picture, is that it could finally pave the way for an end to the Iraqis' suffering. But in overthrowing a madman, the madman's victims have suffered more. May the present-time Og and Magog leave the devastated country and let the fraternal Arab countries reconstruct Iraq and help the Iraqis regain their dignity, sovereign faith and good dreams.

Not all winners deserve the crowning glory, especially if the means applied are tainted with the horrors of war.

—JAMES D. FRANCISCO,
PNB Financial Center, Pasay City

Further to amendments to the Labor Code

THIS is a reaction to the letter of Dean Froilan M. Bacungan last April 11, 2003 in defense of the proposed "New Labor Code," drafted by a group led by him. This draft, for which the Bacungan group was paid by Congress, is now with the Congressional Oversight Committee on Labor and Employment (COCLE). COCLE'S plan, according to persistent reports, is to railroad the draft into law through Congress, when it returns to work from its Lenten recess on April 21.

To start with, I disagree with both Bacungan and his critic, Remigio D. Saladero Jr. (PDI, 4/3/03), concerning unfair labor practice (ULP). Saladero claims that Bacungan's draft decriminalizes ULP. Bacungan says it does not, in other words, ULP remains a crime in his draft.

Under the original PD 442, the Labor Code of the Philippines, ULP was an administrative offense, not a crime. Reason: If husband and wife are a union for procreation, labor and management are a union for production. If you introduce the element of criminality into the equation, whether it is a union to produce children or a union to produce goods, it cannot stand. Criminalizing ULP, if taken seriously by labor and management, is a prescription for endless industrial war. ULP as a crime was later inserted in the Labor Code by then Sen. Boy Herrera, thus embedding malice in labor-management relations in this country. Fortunately, neither labor nor management takes it seriously, thus, despite the deluge of ULP taking place at work places daily, no one has been convicted of ULP as a crime.

The other points raised by Saladero against Bacungan's draft are correct. The draft liberalizes what is popularly called contractualization as a mode of employment. The purpose of contractualization is to prevent an employee from attaining security of employment tenure and eligibility for membership in the collective bargaining unit. As a rule, collective bargaining agreements exclude contractuals, together with casuals, confidentials, etc.

About the minimum wage, the Bacungan draft commits a gross heresy. It says that minimum wages "are better fixed not by statures or wage orders but by collective bargaining." But in the entire civilized world, the purpose of collective bargaining is never to fix the minimum wage; through negotiations, it fixes wage rates above and beyond the minimum. In collective bargaining, the minimum wage is always the starting point, not the end.

Again, Saladero is correct. Bacungan's draft calls for fixing minimum wages by region only once every six years, applicable only to unorganized workers in each region. The trouble is that the oil cartel can raise oil prices anytime. Maynilad and Manila Water jack up the cost of water often than once every six years. And so does Meralco with respect to power. Factor in rice, fish and other daily necessities and you can see how ridiculous minimum wage-fixing once every six years is. Also, regional minimum wages in our country are an insult to common sense. Actually, the cost of living does not vary significantly from region to region. In fact, it is higher in some regions than in Metro Manila. The only purpose of regionalizing minimum wages is to divide and rule the working class, at least in wage-fixing exercises.

—AMADO GAT INCIONG,
Unit 301 Union Square
Condominium, 145 15th Avenue,
Cubao, Quezon City

'We have no king but Caesar'

COMMENTARY

John J. Carroll, S.J.
Institute on Church and Social Issues

PERHAPS it was the arrogance of power that provided the link. As I listened to the voice of President George Bush warning Syria not to harbor supporters of Saddam Hussein, accusing it of having weapons of mass destruction, and admonishing other nations to shape up or face the consequences, my mind kept switching channels to Rome and Jerusalem of 2,000 years ago.

Bush sees himself as the policeman of the world, with a mandate to establish a "pax Americana" or American peace—based on American power and in line with American interests—wherever those interests are involved. Similarly, the Roman Empire at the time of Christ had established a "pax Romana" over most of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East—a peace which provided a certain degree of law and order in return for taxes and subservience to the emperor. Pontius Pilate was its policeman for Judaea.

Yet despite its awesome military technology, the network of roads which linked the "civilized world" to Rome, the magnificent monuments of the Forum, and the theaters and race-tracks around the provinces, the Roman Empire was decaying within. The arrogance of power made it insensitive to the aspirations of subject peoples such as the Jews, and the affluence made possible by the taxes of those same people created a Roman populace which looked only to "bread and circuses"—food and entertainment—to be provided by the State. Eventually the Jews would rise up, only to be brutally suppressed; later the "barbarian" nations on the border of the empire would overrun it, would pillage and loot even the City of Rome itself.

Whether the arrogance of Bush and the support he has received from the majority of the American people signal the beginning of the decline of America as a great nation is a question for future historians. The prospect saddens me, for I love the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, the awesome stillness of the Gettysburg battlefield and the solemnity of the Lincoln monument. I love the land where my ancestors found refuge from war and persecution in Europe, where as coal miner, farmer and carpenter they helped to build a great nation. Some years ago, while rolling on a Greyhound bus through the Pennsylvania countryside, watching mountains and rivers, towns and farms slip by, I found myself singing quietly the hymn "God Bless America."

It pains me too to see the leader of my adopted nation being congratulated on having received a phone call of thanks for her support, from President Bush, and others looking to the jobs for Filipinos which the reconstruction of Iraq may bring. I would have preferred that, like Turkey, the Philippines had refused to be bribed.

The sadness which we feel at this time should not lead to despair; rather it should bring us to confront once again the bed-rock reasons for hope found in the Holy Week liturgy. On Good Friday, it is true, we see the apparent triumph of realpolitik, of power and "practicality," over truth and goodness. The priests refuse to enter the house of Pilate, less they incur ritual impurity, while they demand the death of an innocent man: "It is better for one man to die for the people, than for the whole nation to be destroyed." Pilate, intimidated by the Jews whom he despises, fearful that he will be denounced to the emperor, washes his hands before condemning One whom he himself has declared innocent. The Jews whose ancestors had died proclaiming "We have no king but Yahweh" repudiate their own history as they shout out "We have no king but Caesar." The disciples of the Lord are scattered and demoralized.

And so they go to their homes, Pilate relieved that that difficult matter is over, a bit sorry for Jesus but feeling that He had brought it on Himself; the priests to celebrate the Pasque, satisfied that "that imposter" would disturb their peace no more; the common people muttering that He had been too idealistic, foolish in siding with the weak against the strong and in confronting the power of the High Priest. "One must be practical."

And yet, beneath the surface of the account, the readers senses another reality. There is the calm assurance of Jesus as He confronts Pilate. "Yes, I am a king. I was born for this; I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice." "Truth?" said Pilate, "What is that?" The reader realizes that, although Pilate seems to be judging Christ, he is actually judging himself, failing to recognize the One standing before him, who the night before had said "I am the way, the truth and the life."

Thus, even in the grim reality of Good Friday there is a foreshadowing of Easter Sunday, of the overwhelming, joyful announcement "He has risen!" And as the people of Iraq and peace-loving people around the world go through their own Good Friday at this time, the only real hope is the Easter assurance: there is a Mystery of Goodness at the heart of the universe more powerful than the mystery of evil, and in the end life will triumph over death, love over hatred, good over evil.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Urging care in using 'Muslim' tag

AT THE OUTSET, I wish to inform you that the Interfaith Forum for Solidarity and Peace in Pagadian City and Zamboanga del Sur is a venue for fellowship among people from various tribes and religions in Pagadian City and Zamboanga del Sur, Mindanao. Its convenors include representatives from the Subanen community, Muslim community, the Protestant religious sector and myself, representing the Catholics. The purpose of our coming together regularly is to promote understanding and acceptance among the participants of the forum, thereby paving the way for the attainment of solidarity, justice and peace in our province and city in particular, and the whole nation, in general.

After deep reflection and lengthy sharing on the matter of minimizing, if not totally eradicating biases and prejudices among Muslims and Christians, the forum finally formulated Resolution No. 01, series of 2003, earnestly appealing to all media practitioners, both in print and in broadcast, to refrain from using the word "Muslim" in referring to wrongdoers coming from cultural minority groups, aside from the lumads. Muslims have been complaining against this practice and we sympathize with them. We suggest that news reporters use the culprits' tribal or place of origin instead, in describing them.

We will be very grateful for your favorable action on this appeal.

—ZACHARIAS C. JIMENEZ, D.D.,
Bishop of Pagadian and
convenor, Interfaith Forum for
Solidarity and Peace,
Bishop's House, Pagadian City

Who are and are not entitled to the Meralco refund?

THE SUPREME COURT has confirmed its earlier decision ordering Meralco to refund to its customers P28 billion in overcharged billing since 1994. The questions that arise now is where will Meralco get the P28 billion without paralyzing itself, to the detriment of the public, and who will be entitled to the refund?

Meralco need not make any outlay of fresh funds to refund its customers. It may just assign P28 billion worth of its equity to its customers. Each existing stockholder's equity shall be diminished by a proportionate amount to cover the P28 billion. The shareholders benefited by the overcharge since 1994 and it is only fair that they pay this back by the diminution of the value of their shares. Meralco's total shareholders' equity will not change except that P28 billion will now be owned by its customers entitled to the refund.

Who are entitled to a refund? Only the users for domestic consumption shall be entitled to a refund. Industrial and commercial users are not entitled to any refund because, as they were using power with overcharged rates since 1994, they were recovering this from the higher prices they were charging for their goods and services sold to the public and the taxes denied the government. In effect, the public bore Meralco's overcharge to the commercial and industrial users by the increased prices for goods and services, and the government was denied taxes on profits that were diminished by the overcharge. The commercial and industrial users lost nothing except competitiveness if they are exporters. It is near impossible to assess this loss.

The P28-billion refund should go to the domestic users as equity in the utility company and they may be compensated via rebates in their billings taken out of the annual profit accruing to the P28 billion equity now assigned to them. The amount of the rebate shall be proportionate to their power consumption for the previous year. The P28-billion equity shall remain in perpetuity for the benefit of present and future domestic customers.

Management of Meralco should be taken away from the Lopez conglomerate.

—E.P. DAKANAY JR.,
43 Baltazar St.,
Philamlife Village,
Las Piñas City

Lessons from Enron to consider

THE CRISIS assailing Meralco is increasingly compounded by contradictory ideas. How the embattled consumers should be paid as ordered by the Supreme Court directly relates to whether the almost monopolistic Meralco can survive running the utility firm.

Joseph Stiglitz, Economics Nobel Prize winner for 2001, in a talk at the AIM in Makati City last week, warned about "corporate unbundling of the power industry as this was open to manipulation." He cited the case of Enron in California "that gave way to a power shortage crisis" traced to the manipulation by its board. When Enron collapsed recently because of the scandal linked to its operations, power was restored and became cheaper than before. There was even a surplus afterward, according to Stiglitz.

Here, the timely intervention of the Supreme Court revealed the method of Meralco in throwing to the consumers its income tax debt to the government by making this part of its operating expenses. If this is not cheating the consumers, I don't know what it should be called.

Unless Meralco restructures its corporate decision-making structure so that it becomes publicly transparent, such manipulation cited by Stiglitz will recur in another corporate "creative" form. Millions of consumers will not want that to happen again, or to any other utility group supplying power.

—RAUL E. SEGOVIA,
chair, Citizens' Alliance for
Consumer Protection,
2864-C Zamora St., Pasay City

Holy and green

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

CHURCHES and the Pasyon and "Jesus Christ Superstar" are fine, but maybe this Holy Week we should be thinking of other activities that can help us with thoughtful reflection.

Want to try gardening? I know that suggestion sounds strange, given the summer heat, but you'd be amazed how much can be done early in the morning or toward dusk, half an hour or an hour that will be worth every minute.

Ah, but what can you do living in cities? You'd be surprised. I tend to be utilitarian, thinking too of ways to get kids involved, so I'd suggest activities like vegetables and herbs.

A fairly easy activity that even the very young can handle would be sprouting. Start with munggo beans, which you can get in any supermarket. You soak them overnight, pour out the water then keep the seeds in a sprouting bottle or tray. I've been able to recycle those plastic food trays you get with take-out orders. Punch holes on the bottom with a needle to allow water to drain.

Nothing fancy here, the main objective being to keep the seeds wet, with water changed two or three times a day. Kids are especially good for this since they're curious to check how the sprouts are doing. After a day the seeds are transformed into sprouts and in a few days you'll have tauge ready to eat. Some you can transplant so the kids can continue to watch how the mung plant grows.

There are now a few places that sell other seeds you can sprout, such as alfalfa and buckwheat. Try water cress—the sprouts have a tangy flavor. The best part about sprouting is that you can harvest in three or four days, still eternity for very young kids but then you can throw in lessons about patience as well. The point is that they do get to appreciate the wonders of plant life.

Okay, okay, so I can hear more serious gardeners going, "Sprouts? That's not gardening." I sort of agree, and would urge you to handle more long-term projects. Vegetable gardening is something to explore. Don't let city living hamper you—there are now special planting trays so you can plant even in apartments and condominiums. You'll need a few weeks for vegetables, which means if you start now, you'd be harvesting when the new school year starts, which is still fine because the kids at home would have passed Holy Week, and summer, learning that vegetables don't automatically grow in supermarket freezers.

Then there are herbs. I used to think culinary herbs were limited to temperate countries but it turns out most of these plants are Mediterranean or sub-tropical, and can adapt to our heat. Over the last two years, I've been able to get quite a few herbs going and simply go out to the garden to pick whatever I need, from more indigenous tropical ones like pandan and tanglad to the "western" ones such as basil, tarragon, mint and yes, you can start humming the tune now, parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme.

Herbs aren't just for food. The last few months I've been able to finally get lavender going. As I work on my column I can see some of the potted lavender on the window sill. From time to time, a light breeze wafts in a very subtle sweet scent.

Someone once said, "We come from the earth, we return to the earth, and in between we garden." I can imagine people, all throughout history and in all cultures, stumbling on the joys of gardening. I've already mentioned how it helps young people to appreciate how plants grow, but I think it's also a good way of helping them to appreciate the joys of getting our hands into the soil—we Filipinos are especially notorious about looking down on manual labor.

For older people, gardening is relaxing, and yet can be good exercise. You'd be surprised at how much of an aerobic work-out you can get out in the garden, potting and repotting, moving plants around. What's so fascinating, too, is the way you can "multi-task"—so many of my ideas for my columns hit me when I'm gardening, which isn't surprising because garden is pretty much like religious meditation, a time to empty your mind and yet be mindful.

I think gardening is best done alone, but sometimes company can be good. Dogs love it when they see their humans gardening, and some breeds, like dachshunds, will end up trying to help you dig. Cats are more aloof but you can bribe them to keep you company by planting catnip—watch them float into cat heaven when you snip off a few leaves for them to sniff.

Where can you get supplies? You'll find vegetable and flower seeds in the gardening section of hardware stores, but I'm wary about these outlets because you can't get good advice. Better to try the many plant shops around. At Megamall Building A, when you walk in you'll find Harbest (yes, that's the correct spelling) with seeds and trays for vegetables and sprouting. Virra Mall in Greenhills has regular *tiangges* with people selling plants—my *suki* is Teresa's Garden, with some of the best herbs around.

If you're really serious though about herbs, go to Greenhearts at 72 Mother Ignacia in Quezon City (Tel No. 411-6868). They have all kinds of herbs there, including an astounding variety of basil, each with its own distinct flavor. The Greenhearts people are very helpful, providing detailed instructions on how to care for the plants, including stickers to put on the pots you buy. They'll tell you about how much maintenance is needed for each of the plants so you can decide the ones that fit your lifestyle. (Unfortunately, dogs and cats can't be trained to handle the watering.)

Greenhearts also has an e-mail list you can sign up for, to get bi-weekly tips on caring for the plants. They're closed today and Good Friday but catch them this Easter weekend so you can get started on those plants. Make the week, and the summer, both holy and green!

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

UK, Germany agree on key role for UN

AN IRAQI boy plays football with a US soldier at a checkpoint in central Baghdad April 15. Thousands of guerrillas, including Iraqis loyal to Saddam Hussein and foreign fighters, pose a threat to US troops and complicate efforts to bring stability to postwar Iraq, defense officials said yesterday. REUTERS

HANOVER, Germany—Britain and Germany agreed Tuesday the United Nations should play a "key role" in rebuilding Iraq, putting a major dispute behind them by using the approaching end of the war to rebuild transatlantic relations.

"In principle, the UN must have a key role" in rebuilding Iraq after the US-led conflict that removed Saddam Hussein, Prime Minister Tony Blair said after talks in Germany with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder.

"The important thing is to agree the principle of that role, then discuss between us, diplomatically, the details of how that role must be fulfilled."

Blair agreed with Schroeder, normally a political ally from the center-left but diametrically opposed on how to disarm Iraq, that it was important not to get bogged down in defining what the UN's role might be.

He said the way the UN could help was the third of three main objectives set by Britain and the United States.

Firstly, he said: "It is important that we move Iraq toward a representative form of government and toward democracy." "Secondly, that we do everything in order to ensure that we make progress on the humanitarian front, and in particular that we make sure that security and order is given to the people of Iraq as swiftly as possible."

While many had expected Blair to be the one building bridges between Washington and parts of the European Union that had be alienated by the war, it was Schroeder who appeared to make the most concessions.

"In principle at least we agree on, that the United Nations should have the role of an umbrella in that situation, whether you call it a vital role, or a central role, I think that is all words and terminology," Schroeder said.

"We agree on the fact that there has to be this United Nations umbrella and I think it is... up to the diplomats to then sit down and nail down the whereabouts and the specifics of that umbrella," he said.

Prior to their talks, from where Blair heads to Athens for Wednesday's European Union summit, the chancellor had only ever employed the term "central role" to describe how the UN should operate in the war-torn Gulf state.

Indeed his comments echoed words used by Blair in Belfast following the British leader's summit last week with US President George W. Bush, when he said it was important not to get into "some battle about words."

The meeting in Schroeder's home town of Hanover was the third between the two leaders this year but the first since the United States declared war on March 20 with Britain at its side.

Schroeder has staunchly opposed the war, a move that won him votes in last year's general election but damaged relations with Washington and cost Germany diplomatic credibility.

However the two were almost boastful of the state of their ties. *AFP*

Anti-war front gives way to Iraq gold rush

BERLIN—They couldn't prevent the war, but that hasn't stopped the "Non-Nyet-Nein" coalition of France, Russia and Germany from staking their individual claims to a role in shaping, and profiting from, the new Iraq.

Even before the fighting stopped, the three European powers were moving to build bridges to the United States and Britain to ensure their companies get a share in rebuilding the infrastructure in Iraq.

France says it wants to be pragmatic, Germany says it is an honest broker because it has no economic interests in Iraq, and Russia says it will consider Washington's call to forgive some $8 billion in Soviet era debt.

All three have sounded conciliatory in the past week, while saying they want to see the United Nations play the lead role in post-war reconstruction—tactics widely seen as an effort to avoid being locked out of business deals by the United States.

Their fears are understandable, especially after the US House of Representatives passed a measure last week to bar French, Russian and German companies from winning business in Iraq after the war they resisted. The measure did not become law.

"Nobody in France is under any illusion about France's place in the reconstruction of Iraq in terms of the contracts that will be awarded," said Barthelemy Courmont, researcher at the French Institute for International and Strategic Relations.

"Even before the outbreak of hostilities, we knew we would get nothing."

France led the drive to prevent a war and threatened to use its veto at the UN Security Council to block any resolution authorizing military action against Iraq.

But Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin recently warned against a "victor's spoils" attitude in Iraq. "The idea that Iraq can be a sort of Eldorado, a cake that states can carve up, seems to me contrary to good sense," he said.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who opposed an Iraq war in his 2002 reelection campaign, has been out of favor with President George W. Bush ever since. He has tried to tap his friend, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, to repair the damage. *Reuters*

Engineer of Achille Lauro hijack captured

WASHINGTON—US commandos in Baghdad have captured Abul Abbas, the leader of the violent Palestinian group that killed an American on the hijacked cruise liner Achille Lauro in 1985, US officials said.

Abbas was taken by American special operations forces during a raid Monday night on the southern outskirts of the capital city, US Central Command said in a statement Tuesday.

Several of his associates were also detained during raids at several sites around Baghdad, defense officials said. Commandos, tipped off by US intelligence to Abbas' whereabouts, also seized documents—including Yemeni and Lebanese passports—and weapons such as rocket-propelled grenades, officials said.

American officials would not say whether Abbas would be held inside Iraq, taken to a third country or detained at a US base. They also would not say whether he would face charges in the United States. Abbas was sentenced in absentia to life in prison in Italy for masterminding the Achille Lauro hijacking.

The man known as Abul Abbas, whose name actually is Mohammed Abbas, led a faction of the Palestine Liberation Front, a Palestinian splinter group.

ABBAS

His faction operated out of Tunisia until the October 1985 attack on the Achille Lauro, after which it relocated to Iraq. His group was also responsible for some attacks in Israel.

"He got away from us, and we've been chasing him ever since," said Vince Cannistraro, a former CIA counterterrorism chief. "He's a big catch for us. It's an old score to settle."

The PLF faction under Abbas was a conduit for Saddam Hussein's payments to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers. Israel's Shin Bet intelligence service reported earlier this year that Israel captured several Palestinians who trained at a PLF camp in Iraq and were told by Abbas to attack an Israeli airport and other targets.

Abbas, whose age has been reported between 55 and 62, had eluded arrest since four of his followers hijacked the Achille Lauro as it sailed from Egypt to Israel in October 1985. They demanded that Israel release 50 imprisoned Palestinians.

During the hijacking, his followers shot and killed Jewish American passenger Leon Klinghoffer, 69. The hijackers then tossed Klinghoffer and his wheelchair off the cruise ship.

Klinghoffer and his wife, Marilyn, along with nine friends from the New York area, took the cruise to celebrate their 36th wedding anniversary. They were among 500 passengers taken hostage. Klinghoffer's wife died of cancer just four months after the hijacking.

The hijacking ended Oct. 9 after Egypt negotiated with the hijackers. Abbas, who helped negotiate the surrender, and the four hijackers were flown out of Egypt on a jet that was intercepted by US Navy fighters and forced to land in Sicily.

Tensions arose as soon as the plane landed. Armed US and Italian soldiers faced off, each side demanding custody of the hijackers. The situation was only resolved after feverish telephone calls between Premier Bettino Craxi and President Reagan. *AP*

Iraqi agent in kill-Bush plot spotted in Syria

WASHINGTON—A suspected high-ranking operative of the Iraqi intelligence service, who is believed to have played a key role in a 1993 plot to assassinate former US president George Bush, has been spotted in Syria after arriving there from Tunisia, US officials said.

Faruq Hijazi, whose last official post was Saddam Hussein's ambassador to the North African nation, flew to Damascus from Tunis aboard a commercial jet Tuesday in an apparent attempt to seek refuge in the country following the toppling of the Iraqi government by US forces, said one of the US officials.

"I don't know whether he has been granted refuge or asylum," added the official, who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity.

The discovery was certain to fuel new recriminations between the United States and Syria, which has already been accused of smuggling war materiel into Iraq, allowing foreign Islamic fighters, including members of Hezbollah, to cross its borders, and providing aid and comfort to former Saddam associates fleeing Baghdad.

US officials said "at least a handful" of former members of the Iraqi elite were currently in Syria, but did not offer any specifics.

Damascus has vehemently denied all charges.

US President George W. Bush has used the plot to kill his father as one of the reasons for launching military action against Iraq, referring to Saddam Hussein last September as "the guy who tried to kill my dad."

The multi-stage plot, in which Hijazi is believed to have taken an active part, was uncovered by US and Kuwaiti intelligence services in the first half of 1993.

It called for exploding several powerful bombs during Bush's visit to Kuwait in April of that year, his first after the country's liberation from Iraqi occupation by a US-led coalition in 1991.

A remote-controlled car bomb was reportedly supposed to detonate during Bush's arrival in Kuwait City.

In case the first attack failed, a second car bomb was to be parked near a theater where the former US president was scheduled to receive an honorary doctorate, according to sources familiar with the case.

In addition, a suicide bomber was supposed to strike, if the first two attacks did not work.

Following the capture of several key people involved in the plot by Kuwaiti authorities and an analysis of the bombs, the US Central Intelligence Agency and the US Federal Bureau of Investigation concluded that the explosives were Iraqi-made and that Saddam's intelligence service was behind the conspiracy. *AFP*

Aussie soldier charged with kicking corpse

SYDNEY—An investigation into allegations of unlawful killing and brutality by Australian special forces in East Timor led to a soldier being charged with kicking a militiaman's corpse after an ambush, Army chief General Peter Leahy said Wednesday.

Leahy said another soldier was counseled over gender and workplace harassment after the investigation, which was carried out by the Australian Defense Force with assistance from Federal Police and the United Nations.

Leahy said 19 allegations of misconduct and mistreatment against Australian soldiers carrying out peacekeeping operations following East Timor's independence referendum in 1999 were investigated.

Thirteen were found to be unsubstantiated and though elements of complaints were upheld, investigators found no offense was committed.

The investigation centered on a gun battle on Oct. 6, 1999 near Suai on East Timor's border with West Timor, in which two militiamen were killed, nine wounded and more than 100 captured. Two SAS troops were also wounded in the firefight.

Rumors of subsequent misconduct circulated in defense circles, including claims that a senior special forces soldier, angered over his soldiers' injuries, shot dead one or more of the captives.

Investigators exhumed the bodies of the two dead militiamen from a cemetery in Dili late last year but found no evidence of battlefield executions and concluded the deaths resulted from "professionally conducted counter-ambush measures."

The militiamen belonged to the pro-Jakarta Laksaur group responsible for some of the worst atrocities in the violence that followed an overwhelming vote for independence by the East Timorese in August 1999.

Most of the militia escaped to West Timor and Indonesia—never to be brought to justice for the hundreds of murders, torture, arson and destruction for which they were blamed. *AFP*

PARATROOPERS AND PARADOGS

A military helicopter carries soldiers and military dogs from the Special Force Corp (Kopassus) during celebrations to mark its 51st anniversary at their headquarters in Jakarta April 16. Indonesian defense minister Matori Abdul Djalil yesterday issued one of Jakarta's starkest warnings yet that a pact aimed at ending decades of conflict in Aceh province was in danger, with military action inevitable if it fell apart. REUTERS

Israel closes Palestinian territories for Passover

HEBRON, West Bank—Israel on Wednesday imposed a tight shutdown on the Palestinian territories for the weeklong Jewish festival of Passover, marked by a huge Palestinian bomb attack last year, as Israeli troops in the West Bank shot dead an Islamist resisting arrest.

But Israel suffered a setback on the diplomatic front late Tuesday as US Secretary of State Colin Powell said the long-awaited "roadmap" for Middle East peace will be published soon without changes, despite strong Israeli reservations.

Near the main southern West Bank city of Hebron, Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian militant from the radical Islamic movement Hamas as he resisted arrest, Palestinian and Israeli sources said.

Hassan Soleiman Massara, a member of Hamas' armed wing, Ezzedin al-Qassam, was killed at his hideout in Yatta, residents of the village said.

An Army spokesperson told AFP that the wanted Palestinian refused to give himself up and opened fire at soldiers who surrounded the house, leading to a gunfight in which he was killed.

The latest death raised to 3,160 the number of people killed since the September 2000 start of the uprising against Israeli occupation, including 2,378 Palestinians and 724 Israelis.

As troops continued to scour the West Bank, reoccupied since last June, for militants, the Army also sealed off all the Palestinian territories as a security measure for the Passover holiday.

During the holiday last year, a Hamas suicide bomber killed 29 people celebrating the feast at a hotel in Netanya, a northern Israeli coastal resort which has been the frequent target of Palestinian bombers and gunmen in 30 months of fighting.

"The Palestinians of the West Bank as well as those of the Gaza Strip will not be authorized to enter Israel, following alerts of attacks being prepared during the feast," which marks the Biblical exodus of the Jews from Egypt, a military spokesperson said.

He said the bridges over the Jordan river linking the West Bank to Jordan, and the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt would also be closed at least until Sunday.

In Washington, Powell dealt a blow to Israeli hopes for changes to the peace plan drawn up by the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia, despite Israeli threats to reject the plan if their amendments were not heeded.

The roadmap—completed in December by the international diplomatic "quartet" on the Middle East but delayed due to political developments—will be released in its original form once a Palestinian prime minister is confirmed, Powell said.

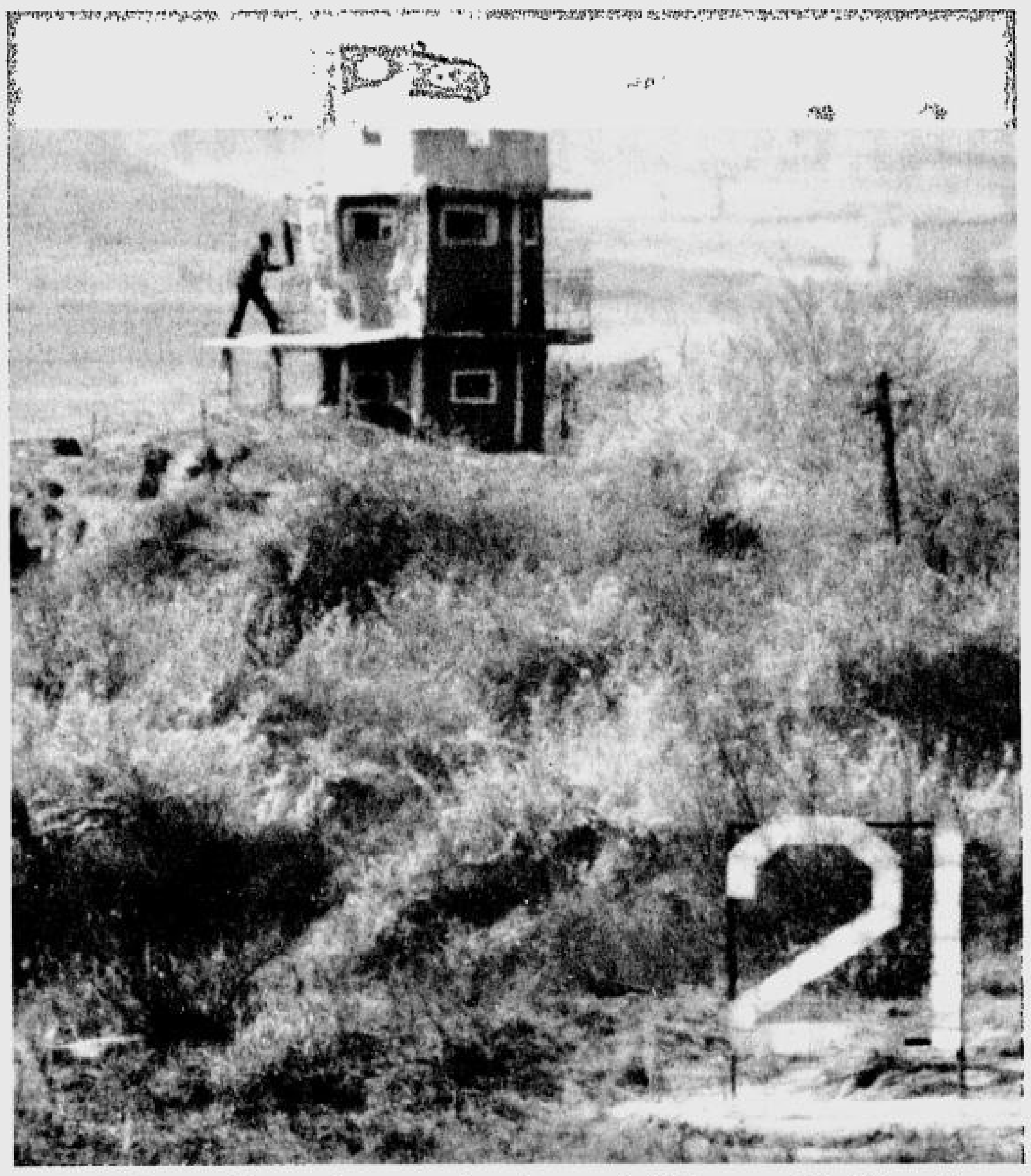
"The roadmap will be released to the parties after Mr. Abu Mazen is confirmed. It will be the roadmap draft that was finished last December," he told reporters.

The Palestinian Prime Minister-Designate, Mahmud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, is expected to be confirmed by the Palestinian parliament along with his cabinet by next week at the latest.

The secretary of state acknowledged that Washington had received a series of initial comments about the draft from Israel and expected to hear more from the Jewish state once the roadmap is released.

At that point, Powell said the United States would also be seeking comments from the new Palestinian government but he stressed that the roadmap would not be changed in response to reactions from either side. *AFP*

US, China, N. Korea to meet on crisis



A NORTH Korean soldier stands on a guard post decorated with flags to mark the 91st anniversary of late North Korean leader Kim Il Sung's birth, at Panmunjom in the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea Wednesday April 16. The number 21 at right is part of a slogan reading "The Sun of the 21st Century, Gen. Kim Jong Il," referring to the current North Korean leader. AP

WASHINGTON—High-ranking diplomats from the United States, China and North Korea are to meet next week in Beijing for talks on a simmering nuclear crisis, a senior US official and diplomatic sources said late Tuesday.

The meeting—which will be the first direct high-level talks between Washington and Pyongyang since the crisis erupted in October—appears to be a compromise between the US demand for multilateral discussions on the crisis and North Korea's insistence on a one-on-one dialogue with the United States.

"We have succeeded in our efforts to establish a multilateral framework," the US official said on condition of anonymity.

However, the talks will be notable for the absence of the two closest US partners in dealing with North Korea, Japan and South Korea, the sources said, confirming a report in published late Tuesday on the New York Times website.

The sources said that Pyongyang, which has alarmed North Asia with its drive for nuclear weapons, has insisted that the three-way format was the only option it would accept.

"This is an initial beginning of dialogue, we wanted them (the Japanese and South Koreans) there but the North Koreans were insistent that it only be the three," the senior US official said.

The official said that an agreement on the three-way meeting had been brokered by China in a "counter-proposal" to US suggestions for a larger group of participants presented to North Korea.

In the proposal, Beijing also agreed to take an active role in the talks, the sources said, adding that this had appealed to the Pyongyang which has long relied on China as its closest ally.

US acceptance of the North Korean requirement seemed to signal a major concession but Secretary of State Colin Powell said earlier Tuesday that "ultimately" the concerns of all North Korea's neighbors would be addressed.

"The one thing that is absolutely clear is that, at whatever level it starts and with whatever attendance it has to ultimately encompass the views and thoughts of all the neighbors in the region," Powell told reporters.

In addition, the sources confirmed the Times report that said Washington "reserved the right" to add other participants to the talks as they continued, including Russia.

The sources also said US officials had assured both Seoul and Tokyo that they would be consulted on a daily basis.

The US State Department and the South Korean foreign ministry declined to comment on the planned talks. North Korean diplomats in Beijing said they had not heard of any such meeting and the Chinese foreign ministry was not immediately available for comment.

The exact dates for the Beijing discussions were not immediately clear, but in an ironic twist, the US delegation will be led by Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific James Kelly, the sources said. *AFP*

S. Africa to pay victims of apartheid

CAPE TOWN/JOHANNESBURG—South African President Thabo Mbeki said on Tuesday his government would make a one-off payment to thousands of victims of apartheid, but he rejected calls to impose a wealth tax on big business.

He also distanced his government from a slew of class-action lawsuits filed in US courts seeking billions of dollars in damages from local and foreign companies accused of benefiting from nearly 50 years of white-minority rule.

"In this regard, we wish to reiterate that the South African government is not and will not be a party to such litigation," Mbeki told parliament in Cape Town.

The rand currency jumped against the dollar and nervous investors welcomed Mbeki's comments, but one lawyer vowed to press ahead with a suit on behalf of tens of thousands of black South Africans.

Mbeki said his government would pay 30,000 rand ($3,890) each to more than 19,000 victims of apartheid identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), set up nearly seven years ago to probe South Africa's apartheid past.

The payment total of 571.5 million rand ($74 million) is far below the three billion rand recommended by the TRC.

Mbeki rejected a TRC recommendation to levy a wealth tax on South African business to help pay for reparations.

"We do not believe that it would be correct for us to impose the once-off wealth tax on corporations proposed by the TRC," Mbeki told parliament in Cape Town.

South African business had lobbied against the wealth tax proposed by Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu last month when the final report of the commission he headed was handed to Mbeki.

South Africa's Chamber of Mines, which represents the country's biggest mining companies, said Mbeki's speech would help restore investor confidence in the country.

"We welcome this measured approach by government and will work with them in the coming weeks to arrive at an amicable conclusion to the issue of reparations," the chamber said.

The rand rallied by 14 rand cents to 7.67 against the dollar after Mbeki's comments. *Reuters*

US city upholds 'right' to be unfaithful

LOS ANGELES—A tiny US city has struck a bizarre blow for the right of married couples to be unfaithful by voting to scrap a 46-year-old law banning adultery, officials said Tuesday.

The city of Rolling Hills, a plush little community of 1,871 people southwest of Los Angeles, decided late Monday to repeal the statute that threatens to punish philanderers with a fine and up to three months in jail.

The city's mayor, Frank Hills, said the move was not intended to encourage Rolling Hills' spouses to be unfaithful, but was rather aimed at ridding the books of an outdated statute.

"It's an antiquated law that has been there almost for half a century," he said, adding that the decision to repeal it did not mean that locals could now run morally amok.

The law was integrated into Rolling Hills' rules when the 8-sq km city was founded in January 1957 and comes with a Draconian set of restrictions on local residents' moral conduct.

The law outlaws everything from exposing oneself to "arousing or appealing to anyone" or "being in any bedroom, room, car or public place" with anyone other than one's spouse "for the purpose of having sex."

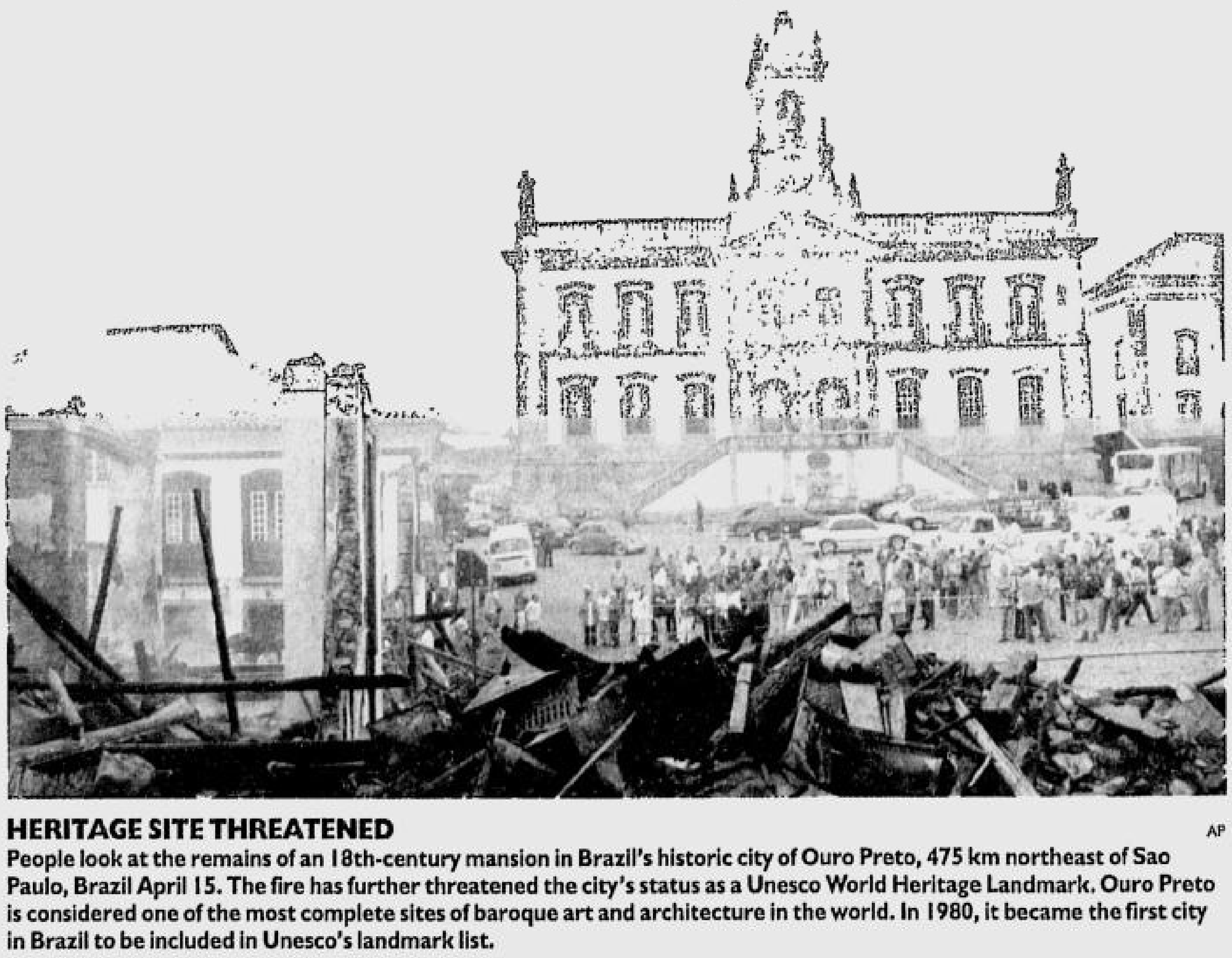
Such transgressions are, according to the second ordinance ever adopted by the city, punishable by a fine of up to $250 or three months behind bars or both. The origins of the law are unknown.

"This is news to me," said local resident Jim Louder. "I'd have to read it first to see if I have been abiding by it."

The city moved to scrap the law after a resident brought it to the council's attention, City Manager Craig Nealis said.

But he stressed that scrapping the law would have no effect on local residents as it had never been enforced and that in any case the city's right to enforce personal conduct rules was taken over by the state in 1962.

"This does not make adultery either legal or illegal in Rolling Hills," he said. It was just a routine step in the normal course of the city's housekeeping as most people didn't even know it existed." *AFP*



HERITAGE SITE THREATENED AP

People look at the remains of an 18th-century mansion in Brazil's historic city of Ouro Preto, 475 km northeast of Sao Paulo, Brazil April 15. The fire has further threatened the city's status as a Unesco World Heritage Landmark. Ouro Preto is considered one of the most complete sites of baroque art and architecture in the world. In 1980, it became the first city in Brazil to be included in Unesco's landmark list.

Disaster after disaster dog Haiti boat people

VILLA VASQUEZ, Dominican Republic—First high winds broke the mast of the overcrowded sloop and swept the captain overboard. Then they ran out of food and water. Days later, the boat crashed into a reef.

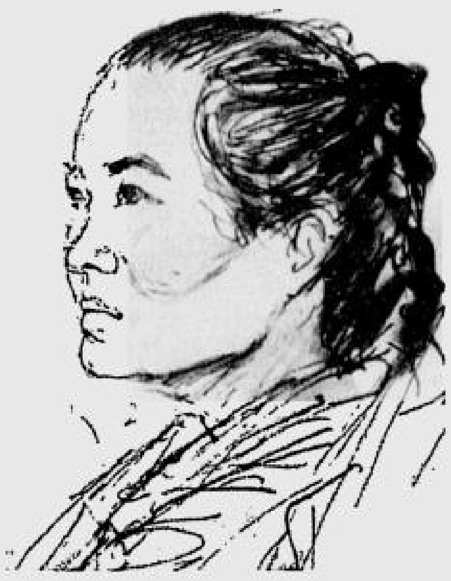
The toll: six dead, 16 missing and dozens of ever-more impoverished and disillusioned Haitians forced back to the troubled land they fled.

Haiti's "economic situation is deteriorating and driving people to risk their lives at sea," said the director of Haiti's national migration office in Port-au-Prince, Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine. "We warn them not to go, but their desperation is greater than their fear."

Survivors from the boat that sank early Tuesday about 200 meters off Punta Rusia in northwest Dominican Republic told authorities that 113 people set off from Haiti's northern city of Cap-Haitien on April 8.

A Dominican fisherman spotted the 30-foot vessel crashed on the reef late Monday and ferried dozens of lucky ones to shore, US Coast Guard spokesperson Ryan Doss said by telephone from Miami.

The fisherman said he saw more than a dozen people wade ashore into mangroves. *AP*



COURTROOM drawing of Katrina Leung during her bail hearing in Los Angeles April 15. AFP

LA socialite accused as spy refused bail

LOS ANGELES—A businesswoman accused of sleeping with US agents in order to steal secrets for China was Tuesday refused bail amid fears she could flee the country with sensitive documents.

Alleged double agent Katrina Leung, 49, who has been dubbed a modern Mata Hari by media here, appeared in court in Los Angeles almost a week after she was arrested in a diplomatically explosive case of double espionage.

US Magistrate Victor Kenton denied her bail request, saying her lawyers had failed to show that she could not flee to China and she may still "have classified information" vital to US national security.

Prosecutors said in court documents that Leung was a flight risk who had told Federal Bureau of Investigation agents she wanted to "disappear" and claimed to have more than 2,100 contacts with senior Chinese officials.

Prosecutors say Leung, who has almost a million dollars in 16 bank accounts as well as around $2 million in property, had long-term affairs with two FBI agents from whom she stole secret documents and passed them on to communist China.

The uncovering of the alleged espionage operation has forced the troubled FBI to launch a major review of its security procedures.

The bail hearing came as The New York Times said the FBI feared that Leung could have tipped off Beijing to an alleged US attempt to plant bugs on China's presidential jet while it was being refitted in the United States.

The Chinese said they discovered 27 bugs when they took receipt of the Boeing 767 in October of 2001, including listening devices in the headboard of the then President Jiang Zemin's on-board bed.

US officials have never acknowledged involvement the bugging operation.

Leung, a successful ethnic-Chinese entrepreneur, carried on a 20-year romance with former FBI agent James Smith, 59, during which she used her access to him to steal secrets from his briefcase, prosecutors allege. *AFP*

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7 drowning victims set to be buried Easter Sunday

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—On Easter Sunday, the remains of the seven boys who drowned in the Laguna de Bay will be buried at the municipal cemetery.

Meanwhile, silence haunts a small barangay in this town after the drowning that brought tragedy to three families here over the weekend.

Relatives and friends of the seven victims are still in shock.

"The water is very low. The lake is calm. I cannot believe how they all drowned," asked Helen Perez, who lost three sons.

On Sunday, fishermen found five bodies floating in the lake.

The bodies were caught in fish nets.

On Monday before dawn, another two were recovered 300 meters away from where they were last seen alive.

Victims Genaro Javier, 12, his brother Christian, 10; brothers Anafran Griberto, 10, Xilenver, 8, and Arvix Perez, 7; and Elmer Jimenez, 11, and his brother Edizer, 9, were all neighbors.

The group was known in the neighborhood as very close to one another. Their houses were some kilometers away from the lakeshore.

Caring sons

Thirty-eight-year-old Nelia Javier said she still couldn't believe that two of her sons are gone.

She said she never allowed any of her children to go swimming in Laguna Lake because of numerous stories about the tragedies that happened there.

Nelia said her sons Genaro and Christian were very close to each other. Genaro had just graduated from elementary school and was very excited to go to high school.

"They were very caring. Genaro would even gamble in a game of *tatsing* (a coin game) just to help in our expenses," Javier said.

Helen Perez, 40, said she would surely miss the giggles of her three sons at night. The boys, she said, were very concerned with their studies and responsible in performing house chores.

"My sons were very hardworking. Elmer even vended *palaspas* last Sunday morning. He gave me the P20 that he earned," said 41-year-old Leonora Jimenez.

She said she noticed Edizer playing with the tape measure the night before the tragedy. He was like measuring the table and his body, she added.

A day after, Jimenez understood what Edizer meant.

Mysterious

Barangay Bayog, where the tragedy happened, is a lakeshore community off Laguna de Bay. With a population of more than 2,000, majority of the residents are into fishing. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

'LITANY OF ALLEGATIONS'

UN report on abuses angers Palace

BAGUIO CITY—Malacañang has directed the Philippine representative to the United Nations to dispute a UN Commission on Human Rights report, which urged an investigation of human rights abuses supposedly being committed against indigenous Filipinos, the INQUIRER learned on Tuesday.

The INQUIRER obtained a copy of the Philippine government's response to Rodolfo Stavenhagen, UN special rapporteur on indigenous peoples concerns, who told the 59th session of the UNCHR in Geneva last week that the Philippine government had been unable to implement the landmark Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (Ipra) of 1997.

Without a forceful and reinforced application of the country's only IP law, "further serious social conflict and attendant human rights violations will occur," Stavenhagen said in his report.

He said the government must immediately address multiple reports about state-led harassment of indigenous peoples, including in areas that have been militarized due to government's ongoing conflict with communist rebels and secessionists.

But the government said the UN official's report was "a litany of unsubstantiated allegations and ridiculous recommendations."

"The Philippines can only conclude that (Stavenhagen) had allowed his mandate to be hijacked and manipulated by groups with hidden agenda with bloody consequences for the people whom (Stavenhagen) is supposed to protect," said Denis Yap Lepatan, head of the Philippine delegation to the UNCHR session.

Lepatan said Stavenhagen was in the Philippines in December last year, and had spent time touring mining towns of Benguet as well as in Mindanao, "not with an open mind nor in a constructive manner, but with a foregone conclusion . . . ill-will, and bad faith."

Stavenhagen met with Ibaloi and Kankanaey land claimants of Baguio and Benguet here on Dec. 10, before he toured communities within the compound of the 64-year-old Lepanto Consolidated Mining Corp. in Mankayan, Benguet.

He later visited San Luis town in Agusan del Sur, accompanied by members of the Tebtebba Foundation, a UN-based lobby group for indigenous Filipino rights.

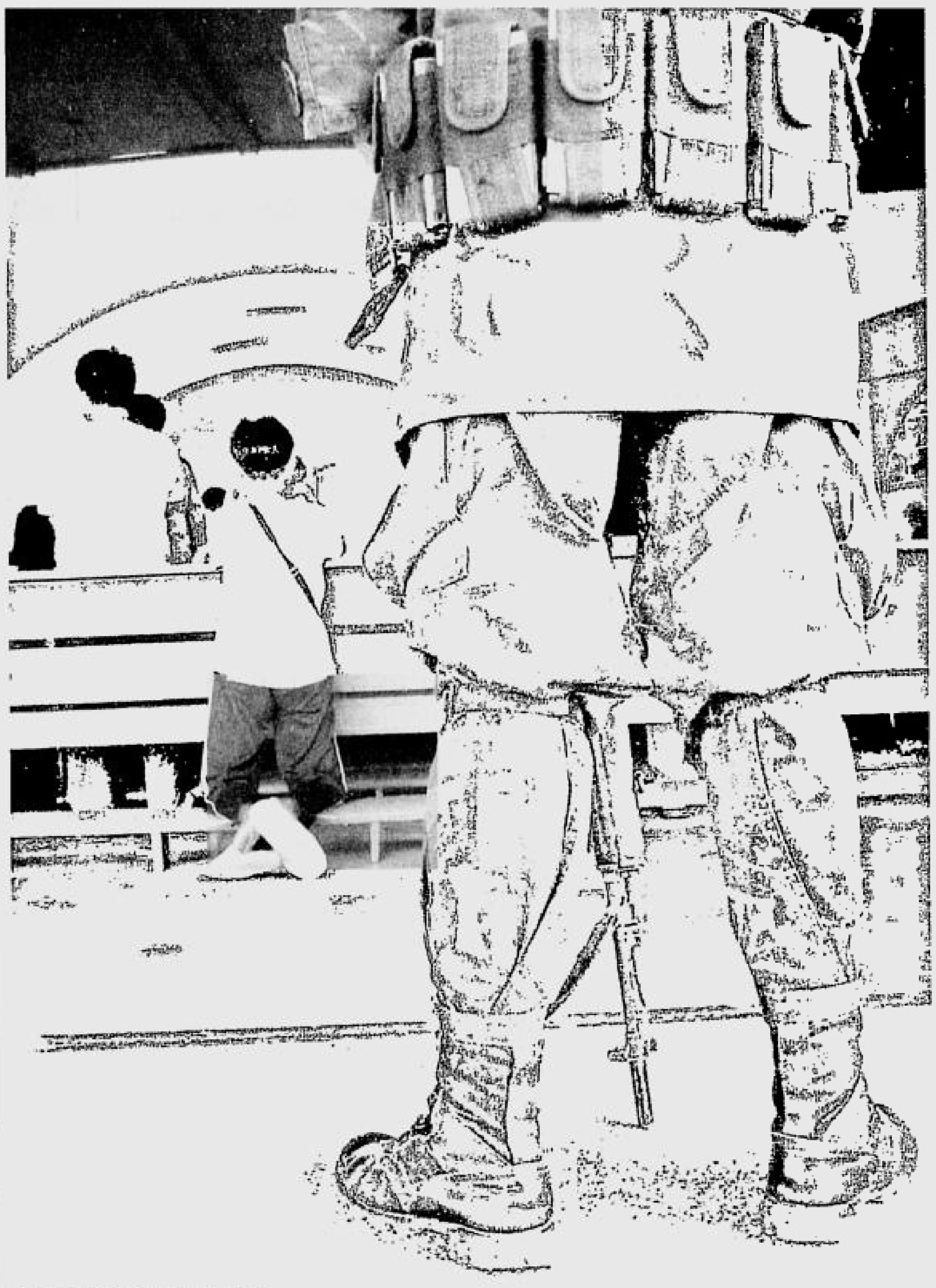
Based on his tour, Stavenhagen documented Philippine cases of arbitrary detention, murder, torture, demolition of houses, involuntary displacements, rape and forced recruitment to paramilitary units of the indigenous Filipinos.

Stavenhagen, a Mexican sociologist, said a resolution to Philippine ancestral land conflicts should be the government's priority instead of commercial development. He said self-determination was key to overcoming centuries-old persecution.

But Lepatan cited INQUIRER reports about Stavenhagen's visit to Baguio and Agusan del Sur to stress to the UNCHR that Stavenhagen "had inspired the wrong group—the communist terrorists, who considered his visit . . . as an endorsement of their evil designs."

He said Stavenhagen had ignored the government's position, and had dismissed "volumes of materials" about the country's indigenous peoples programs, when he presented his report to the UN.

He said Stavenhagen used the Philippine visit as a "media opportunity to cast wild accusations against the government." *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

GUARDED MOMENT

Reeling from two terrorist attacks, Davao City officials apparently got convinced that faith isn't just enough to ward off evil. Government soldiers had to be posted in churches, like the San Pedro Cathedral, and other crowded places in the city.

Lent brings tourists to district in Iloilo with life-size 'santos'

By Ma. Diosa Labiste, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

ILOILO CITY—Thousands flock to Molo District to witness the Holy Thursday and Good Friday processions where centuries-old statues of saints dressed in finest clothes and placed on elaborately decorated carriages are featured.

The processions have been held as long as residents in Molo can remember, probably since their stone church was built in 1831.

The Lenten processions take place every year, except during World War II when Japanese soldiers overran Molo Church and some houses nearby and took 27 of the 29 images used in the procession. Some were burned, others, thrown into the Iloilo River.

But two were spared—the "Sto. Intierro" (Holy Corpse) and the "Mater Dolorosa" (Sorrowful Mother) as stories went.

The processions draw hundreds of devotees and tourists because Molo has the most statues and tableaus that portray the Passion of Jesus from the time he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday until his resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Nobody could tell how some life-sized images came to Molo from Spain. They were probably bought by the families or were owned by the Molo Church and were assigned to some prominent families to be prepared for the Lenten processions.

According to their current owners, they are the fourth or fifth generation owners of antique images that were passed on to them like a precious heirloom.

William Martirez said preparing the Sto. Intierro brings together his family and cousins of Sian-Montelibano clan together.

"Our reunions are timed during the Holy Week because of the clan tradition of preparing the image for the Good Friday processions," he said.

The Sto. Intierro is enclosed with a gold-leafed wooden canopy. Days before the processions, the icon and its silver-gilded carriage were taken out for cleaning and repair.

Preparing the life-size image for procession is like preparing a person for an ancient burial, said Martirez.

The whole body was perfumed, the hair combed neatly and covered with a white sheet before the suede maroon gown was draped on the wooden santo.

Being a prominent image in the Good Friday procession, the Sto. Intierro has throngs of devotees willing to push and pull the carriage.

After the procession, the men have to guard the icon from those who attempt to cut its hair off, chip off an exposed wooden part or rip a shred of its gown.

A piece of cloth, wood or hair are thought to have magic powers and they are often used by fishers in rituals to bring them good catch, by healers to fortify their medicines, or those who possess "anting-anting" or *talisman*.

The Sanson clan said they got their tableau of the scourging of Jesus from a childless family in Molo that felt they were too old to prepare the icons for the Lenten procession.

Village chief killed, 8 others wounded in grenade attack

KABACAN, North Cotabato—The village chair of Barangay Poblacion here was killed while eight others, including a 14-year-old boy, were wounded after a grenade exploded at a refreshment parlor here on Monday evening.

Police said Herni Guzman, was the apparent target of the attack.

Senior Insp. Abello Diongaya, police chief, said they were looking into politics as the most probable motive for the attack.

Witnesses said two motorcycle-riding men passed by shortly before the explosion that also wounded Guzman's nephew, barangay councilman Herlo Jr. and another village official, Claudio Macaya. The other victims were identified as Cesar Domingo, 14; Dave Abellera, 25; brothers Voltier and Paulo Molo; Hernani Gimenez and Celestino Pacete, all residents of this town.

The survivors said they were gathered in a casual talk at the corner of Rizal Avenue and Diego Silang Street at around 9:15 p.m., as the whole town was without electricity following the toppling of a Napocor pylon in nearby Kayaga Village, when a grenade exploded in their midst.

Mayor Luzviminda Tan agreed with the police's suspicion that the explosion was intended for Guzman.

"Politics could be behind it," Tan said without elaborating.

But North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol said a deeper investigation should be done before any conclusion could be made.

"As of today, it is too early to come up with a conclusion on the case," Piñol said.

Maj. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said they could not verify suspicions that Guzman's attackers were members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

But efforts to connect the MILF to the attack were dismissed by some officials.

They said although a Christian, Guzman and his family were well loved by Muslims including those from outlying villages.

In fact, because of this close association with Muslims, a brother of his was once tagged a suspect in the series of explosions that hit Central Mindanao. *Jeffrey Tupas with reports by Charlie Señase, Edwin Fernandez, Rosa-May de Guzman and Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

RELATIVES of a wounded victim of the grenade attack in Kabacan express panic and anguish in a hospital where the victims were taken.

AP

Bus firm opens route to Iloilo

PHILTRANCO yesterday announced the opening of another bus route to Iloilo, saying in a statement that it was a first in Philippine transport history.

The firm said in its statement that it will be the first time that Iloilo may be reached by land transportation from the Philtranco bus station in Pasay City.

The firm said the opening of the new route is part of its compliance with President Macapagal's Strong Republic Nautical Highway project.

Philtranco, a firm that was started in 1914 by American serviceman A.L. Ammen, said the new route is just one of the bus firm's many projects.

The firm also promised to cut down travel time and reduce the waiting time of passengers in terminals.

The new route, Philtranco said, offers a cheap alternative to air or sea transportation and could also help ease the volume of passengers during holidays.

The new route follows the launching of the Philtranco Central Station in Pasay City.

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Editor Jun Bandayrel ◎ Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Pilgrimage to 14 Batangas churches

By Mei Magsino
Taal, Batangas

NO OTHER season have the Catholic churches been so alive for a longer period of time than during Lent, when most people leave work or whatever preoccupation they have to meditate on their wrongdoings inside their favorite church or churches while doing the Stations of the Cross.

Indeed, no other occasion has captured the attention of Batangueños into repentance for their sins than the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In Batangas, where people don't whip themselves in public or have themselves crucified, the sacrifice is done through fasting and church visits or the Visita Iglesia.

THE CHURCH in honor of the Our Lady of Caysayay where the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared in 1603. PDI PHOTO/SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Stations

Completing the 14 Stations of the Cross with prayers said in 14 churches in different towns and cities is like Christ's journey to Mt. Calvary.

"Sometimes people pray two or three station prayers per church, but most of us visit 14 churches to complete the prayer," Tito Aguirre, provincial information officer, said.

Instead of crosses on their shoulders, as what Christ carried up to Calvary, the people carry rosaries and prayer books with them inside the churches in front of the symbols of the stations.

They go in groups or with families and neighbors on a route that will take them to 14 churches in 14 towns. The observance lasts the whole day, starting at 9 a.m. or from night, starting at 7 p.m., till dawn. That would represent their sacrifice on the season that commemorates the death and resurrection of Christ.

Some of the Visita Iglesia tours start on Maundy Thursday, after the confession.

"In Batangas, most pilgrims start the Visita Iglesia on Good Friday, after 3 p.m., which commemorates the death of Christ on the Cross," Aguirre said. "Some towns, like Bauan, even bury Christ."

In a procession from the Catholic Church, the faithful bring the statue of Christ on the Cross all over town and end up at the public cemetery, where Christ is supposed to be buried.

Also, on the night of Good Friday, the wake of Christ is held in church, with the statue of Christ lying down and covered by cross displayed inside the church for the faithful [illegible] remember His death.

THE TAAL Basilica built in 1572, or a year after the founding of Manila. The basilica is one of the favorite churches of Lent pilgrims. PDI PHOTO/SOUTHERN LUZ BUREAU

Most visited

In Batangas, more people visit those churches with historical and miraculous backgrounds, such as those in Taal, Alitagtag, Cuenca, San Jose, Lipa City, Batangas City and Bauan.

As they start the tour from their hometowns, the churches that they must visit include the Taal Basilica and the Shrine of Caysasay near the church, Batangas City's Basilica of the Immaculate Concepcion, and the San Jose Church. Among the most visited are Lipa's San Sebastian Cathedral, the Carmel Church, and the Redemptorist Church.

The Taal Basilica was established by the Agustinian priests in 1572, a year after the founding of Manila. The monumental church was declared a national shrine in 1974. Not far is the Shrine of Our Lady of Caysayay, where the image of the Virgin Mary appeared in 1603.

A short distance from the shrine is the Balon ni Sta. Lucia (Well of Sta. Lucia), where an elaborately carved arch was constructed over a spring whose waters are said to have healing powers. It is also said to have been the site of the Virgin's apparition. Made of coral stone, the arch was constructed in the 18th century.

Another favorite of pilgrims are the churches of Alitagtag and Bauan, where the miraculous cross that warded off evil spirits and even provided water to residents in 1695 was cut in half.

The two halves of the cross were placed in the two churches and were joined only during the towns' fiesta celebration. Both churches were constructed under the tutelage of the Augustinian priests.

From Alitagtag, people go to San Jose Parish Church, which provides a relaxing and solemn atmosphere, and then to the Batangas City Basilica or straight to Lipa's San Sebastian Cathedral or the Redemptorist Church.

The basilica was constructed in 1575. This was also the site where the miraculous Sto. Niño de Cebu floated back from Cebu for several times in 1580.

In Lipa, the Visita Iglesia will never be complete without a visit to the Carmel Church, the site of the shower of rose petals, the apparition of Our Lady of Mediatrix in 1948, and the dancing sun in 1991.

The management of Bluroze Park, a nature park in Barangay Lodlod, has also constructed its own 14 Stations of the Cross and a garden of saints where campers during the Lenten season can pray.

The Marian Center, near the Carmel church, also has its own Stations of the Cross.

Abstinence

Since Maundy Thursday, as Catholics abstain from eating beef, pork, chicken and other meat products, during the Visita Iglesia, they are not allowed to eat anything. But an occasional drink of water is allowed.

Until the *visita* is complete, the devotees must endure hunger as a symbol of sacrifice.

Gone are the days of wearing *sutanas*, as people are now allowed to wear casual clothing. Casual attire does not include revealing or sleeveless outfits or mini skirts.

Girl lets go of dreams, not will to live

By Mei Magsino
Batangas City

MOLINA Calaluan, 15, used to have ambitions to finish college, be a successful professional, and give her parents a better life. But now, under pain of daily dialysis and her body swelling everyday, she has forgotten how to dream.

For two years now, Molina has been suffering from nephrotic syndrome, a degeneration of the kidneys that has mostly affected the renal tubes.

And for the two years that she has undergone daily dialysis, her family's finances have been depleted, forcing her mother Florencia, 50, to give her only three of the four prescribed therapies daily.

Even the maintenance drugs that Molina is supposed to be taking everyday are no longer given to her simply because her parents have no money to buy them.

"We can't afford giving her four dialysis treatments everyday," which cost P1,200, Florencia said. "The P1,000 we spend for her three treatments everyday is already difficult to earn, how much more for P1,200 and the maintenance drugs?"

Molina's father, Romulo, 50, is the barangay chair of San Antonio on Verde Island in Batangas City, and his honorarium for his services is small.

Her second eldest brother, who used to finance her therapy from his salary as an overseas Filipino worker, is now out of job.

Swelling

Molina's illness was discovered when her body started swelling on July 9, 2001. She was then on her third year at the San Antonio National High School in Isla Verde. Ten days after, she was taken to the Philippine General Hospital in Manila where the nephrotic syndrome was diagnosed.

The disease was congenital, and Molina's love for junk foods and salted fish had activated the disease.

"After the treatment at the PGH, she insisted on continuing with her studies. She even got grades higher than did her classmates who had perfect attendance," Romulo said. But one day, seven months later, while she was in school, she lost consciousness. She was rushed to the Batangas Regional Hospital (BRH).

On March 10, 2002, doctors recommended that Molina be transferred to a private hospital. The BRH, a government-funded hospital, has no facilities to support Molina's treatments.

But it turned out that even the private hospital where she was brought had no such facilities. Romulo said they transferred Molina to the Mary Mediatrix Medical Center in Lipa City, about 50 km from Batangas City.

"That time, she was having a hard time breathing. There was already water in her lungs, heart and kidney."

Doctors at the Mediatrix started her peritorial dialysis every two hours, and made a hole in Molina's stomach where the solutions could pass into her body.

"My daughter was so determined to get well," Florencia said. "Despite all the pain, she held on to her belief that she would get well and lead a normal life. That time, our money was fast vanishing."

Good Samaritans

As for Romulo, he has never lost faith in the charity of good people. "People would come to us and give us P500 or P100 just to show us that they care and give us hope to hold on," he said.

The Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office has even sent help by giving them a box of Baxter dialysis solution that was good for three days' treatment.

"We stretched the three days supply to four days because we had no more money to buy another day's supply. We even owe the drugstore where we used to buy her medicine," Florencia said. "We have already disobeyed Molina's attending doctor who still insists on giving her treatments at least four times a day. But how can we do that? We have no money to buy the medicine."

Molina was supposed to be confined in a hospital while undergoing daily dialysis treatment. She was supposed to be conditioned for 12 months before she undergoes a kidney transplant, which could bring her life back to normal.

"We were supposed to spend over P150,000 for her pre-operation conditioning. And for the operation, about P500,000. We have already spent about a million since 2001 and we have no more money for that. I hope some good people will help us," Romulo said.

Since her parents cannot afford the hospital expenses, Molina stays in their home in Malitam in Batangas City and takes the deficient dialysis therapies there even as her feet continue to swell. She can't even stand and remain seated on the chair where she also sleeps. She can't sleep lying down as she can't breathe in that position.

"I have been in pain for so long now that I have forgotten how it feels to be normal," Molina said. "My vision is also blurred and my body hurts all the time. But I'm holding on."

For Molina, the hope to get well someday never fades. She might have lost her dreams but her determination to live stays on.

Anyone who wishes to help Molina may get in touch with the INQUIRER *Southern Luzon Bureau at (052) 8208402 or get in touch with the Calauan family at telephone No. (043) 7237395.*

MOLINA Calauan at home. A girl deprived of dreams, but not the will to live. PDI PHOTO/MEI MAGSINO

Quirimit banners Tanduay bid in Tour Pilipinas

By June Navarro

THREE souped-up teams from the private sector will try to create a niche in the local cycling scene as they battle for supremacy in the Tour Pilipinas 2003.

Tanduay, PLDT-NDD and Bowling Gold, squads armed with some of the talented riders in the country, vie for the P1 million top team prize and the glory that goes with it during the 15-stage Tour from April 26-May 11.

National rider Arnel Quirimit, who created ripples in countless tournaments here and abroad, anchors Tanduay's bid with Tour veteran Hector Padilla calling the shots for the team which also made waves in basketball.

Tanduay also boasts of Ericson Obosa, Joseph Millanes, Eric Tolentino, Oscar Espiritu, Dominador Jacob and Jesus Garcia on its roster. Although they have yet to reap the dividends of their labor, these guys cannot be taken for granted in the race for supremacy.

Bowling Gold got a prized catch in Santy Barnachea, the 2002 FedEx Express Tour of Calabarzon champion.

Barnachea will take over the maneuverings of Bowling Gold, which has also tapped the comical yet shrewd Ceferino Vacunawa as head coach.

Completing the roster of Bowling Gold are 5-foot-11 national team mainstay Alfie Catalan, Michael Gonowon, Jeffrey Talaver, Dionisio Mendoza, Alfredo Mapa and former Tour champion Rolando Pagnanawon.

PLDT-NDD riders are also in peak form with Express Tour Albert Primero and Rainer Austria bound to create a lot of headaches for the opposition and make things easy for head coach Alfredo Millanes.

Promising names like Jessie Bacudo, Noli Del Rosario, Roque Bautista, Virgilio Muena and Oscar Fronda also fortified the PLDT-NDD lineup.

Davenport, Capriati rip clay rivals

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida—Second seed Lindsay Davenport won easily while Jennifer Capriati was tested in their first matches of a $585,000 WTA clay court event here on Tuesday.

Davenport, of the United States, cruised to a 6-1, 6-0 victory over Australia's Nicole Pratt and moved on to the third round.

Davenport returns to this event for the first time since 1999.

The 26-year-old, who underwent knee surgery in January 2002, won this event six years ago.

She arrives having reached the semifinals in a WTA tournament last week in Charleston.

She holds 4-0 lifetime record against Pratt.

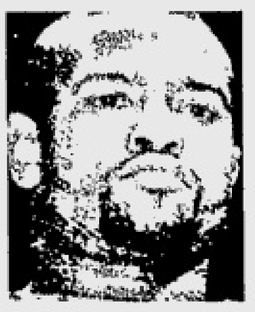
After receiving a first-round bye, the third-seeded Capriati posted a 6-4, 7-6 (7-5) victory over Marie-Gaianeh Mikaelian of Switzerland.

Capriati took the first set in 37 minutes but needed 72 to secure the second. She pulled out of Charleston with strep throat.

"Actually, I think it's good for me to have a tough match like that because it's my first match on the clay, so I wanted to try to get as much match play as possible," Capriati said. "I was happy it didn't go to the third set. I think it was just enough for me." Fourth seed Daniela Hantuchova of Slovakia beat Japanese qualifier Akiko Morigami 7-5, 6-2.

A quarterfinalist for the fifth time last week in Charleston, the 19-year-old Hantuchova will take on No. 16 American Alexandra Stevenson in the third round.
AFP

Jones surrenders light heavy crown


JONES

NEW YORK—Roy Jones will keep his World Boxing Association heavyweight title and surrender his undisputed world light heavyweight title.

Promoter Murad Muhammad told USA Today that Jones has decided to keep the crown he won from John Ruiz last month, a historic victory as the first former middleweight champion in more than a century to win the heavyweight title.

Muhammad said Jones, 48-1 with 38 knockouts, had sent the WBA a letter informing them of his decision, which was to have been made by Tuesday.

"Roy Jones Jr. would like to keep and defend his heavyweight title," said Muhammad.

But that's where the problems begin. The WBA insists that Jones defend the crown against top-ranked contender Vitali Klitschko of Ukraine.

Jones, however, wants to fight Evander Holyfield, a bout planned for later this year which could bring Jones a 10 million-dollar payday.

"He's leaning towards defending the heavyweight belt against Holyfield," Muahammad told the newspaper.
AFP

Parks hoops school backed

BOBBY Parks, a seven-time PBA best import awardee, is imparting his skills to children through his basketball school.

Recognizing the school's merit, Growee, a brand of vitamins for kids manufactured by Pediatrica Inc. (Unilab), has tied up with the Bobby Parks Hoops School. Officially, it will now be called The Growee Hoops School.

The school has surged ahead over all others, bringing the Basic Basketball Program and the Advance Basketball Program to more than 20 venues and schools, all over Metro Manila. Over the next three months, the Hoops School will be in The British School (at the Fort), Chiang Kai Shek College, Paref-Southridge, Marymount School in Parañaque, St. James Academy of Malabon, St. Stephen's High School, Philippine Cultural High School (Caloocan and Manila), St. Mary's Academy, Cavite School of St. Mark, Sacred Heart School Novaliches, Toyota Motor Philippines, Meralco Gym , Center for Children's Well-Being, plus 13 other Las Piñas schools, pooling together for one big session at Southville School in Las Piñas.

For details, call 687-4364 or 687-2025.

PARADORN celebrates 7-5 3-6 7-6 victory over Australian Peter Luczak. REUTERS

Paradorn targets top 10

MONACO—Smoke–and, in Monte Carlo at least, clay–gets in your eyes. Grass doesn't of course, and for Paradorn Srichaphan the grasscourt season can't come quickly enough as the Thai tennis ace targets the world top 10.

Paradorn, seeded seven here, toiled in high winds on the Mediterranean shore before eking out a 7-5, 3-6, 7-6 (7/4) win over Australian qualifier Peter Luczak to reach the second round of the Monte Carlo Masters Series and said he's take any wins on clay as a bonus.

"It was my first match on clay this season–I didn't do much before coming here," explained the 23-year-old from Bangkok who jetted in on Sunday and had a couple of practice sessions before tackling Luczak.

Paradorn acknowledges the pressure is not yet fully on as he has nothing to defend on last year's clay season, save for a run to the third round of the French Open.

"I didn't do anything from last year's Monaco to the French Open. Clay is not my favorite surface.

"I've set my goal that after Wimbledon I'd like to be in the top 10," he explained, having spent the last six months ensconced in the top 20.
AFP

Tan-Ho cops 14-under title

By Marc Anthony Reyes

JOSHUA Tan-Ho fashioned out a monumental upset of top seed Russel Arcilla Jr., 6-3, 6-2, yesterday to pocket his first-ever boys' 14-under division title in the 2003 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop at the Olivarez Sports Center indoor courts.

The victory of the 11-year-old Tan-Ho not only sent shock waves to his long-time age-group counterparts but also brought promise to Milo's grassroots development program.

Using his raw talent and displaying grace under pressure, Tan-Ho, a Xavier grade schooler, warded off Arcilla's persistent charge and went for the kill after only an hour.

He will thus earn points in the Group 2 Philippine Tennis Association sanction for winning the netfest organized by the Children's Tennis Workshop and supported by Wilson balls, adidas and Sports Kid.

Sharing the limelight with Tan-Ho was Kyle Dandan who won the centerpiece boys' 18-under category after beating Michael Basco, 4-6, 6-1, 6-3.

Miguel Narvaez topped the boys' 16-under, Tomie Apacible ruled the boys' 12-under and Alberto Villamor copped the unisex 10-under title.

Narvaez routed Nestor Celestino, 6-1, 6-1, in the finals, while Apacible bested Edwin Olivarez, 6-2, 7-5, and Villamayor defeated Noel Agra, 6-1, 6-2.

In the girls' division, Sarah Lim prevailed in the 12-under, Trudy Amoranto in the 14-under, Denise Culaba in the 16-under, and Kristel Samala in the 18-under division.

Lim downed Regina Santiago, 6-1, 6-3; Amoranto demolished Hazel Grecia, 6-0, 6-3; Culaba overwhelmed Antonia Pascual, 6-2, 6-2; and Samala nipped Culaba, 7-5, 6-3.

Philta chair Dr. Pablo R. Olivarez and Milo sports executive Pat Goe-Ong awarded the Milo trophies and medals to the winners.

Armstrong, wife near reconciliation

WASHINGTON —Kristin Armstrong, the estranged wife of four-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong, said the cycling legend will have his family together in July when he goes for a fifth consecutive victory.

In an interview with Outside magazine, Kristin Armstrong said she and her husband are working on reconciling their four-and-a-half year marriage. She said they spent several days together in Nice, France, in late March.
AFP

TOP NOVICE RIDER

Last year's "Rookie of the Year" awardee Nikki Romero of R-II Builders-Shell Advance swept the first two rounds of the 2003 Shell Super Bike Series at the Batangas Racing Circuit in Rosario, Batangas, recently. Romero, riding his Yamaha R6, clocked 23:01.014 in the first race and 17:34.450 in the second.

Ernie keeps Guam motocross diadem

GUAM—Ernie Leongson became the first rider to become back-to-back champion in the 2003 Miller Light Smokin Wheel Invitational motocross championship held at the Calvo Memorial Off-Road Park here recently.

Leongson, a two-time national champion known as "Mr. Nice Guy," achieved the feat against some of the best riders in the region.

Looking almost unstoppable in his YZ 250, the multi-awarded campaign from Taytay, Rizal dominated both the flat track and 250cc categories to capture top honors in the two-day event organized by the Guam Racing Federatino (GRF).

Leongson, who is also being supported by Shell Advance and Norkis Yamaha, defeated Guam champions Steve Santos and Frank Rios.

SPORTSTV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - Wizards vs 76ers, 7p.m.., IBC 13; Knicks vs Celtics, Game 5, 1st Round 1990 East Playoffs, tomorrow at 8 a.m.; Rockets vs Jazz, Game 5, 1st Rd 1995 West Playoffs, tomorrow at 11 a.m., Bulls vs Lakers, Game 1, 1991 NBA Finals, Saturday at 7 a.m.; Rockets vs Spurs, Game 6, 1995 West Finals, Saturday at 9 a.m.; Bucks vs Pacers, Game 5, 1st Rd 2000 East Playoffs, Saturday at 11 a.m., Solar Sports

Lightning triumphs

WASHINGTON —Vincent Lecavalier scored on a two-man advantage in overtime Tuesday as the Tampa Bay Lightning ended 41/2 years of frustration in the U.S. capital with a 4-3 win over the Washington Capitals .

With Jaromir Jagr and Ken Klee in the penalty box, Lecavalier poked in a rebound 2:29 into the extra period.

The victory reduced the Capitals' first-round playoff series lead to 2-1 and snapped an 11-game Lightning losing streak at the MCI Center. Tampa Bay's last road win over Washington came on Nov. 4, 1998.

After a game in which the playoff-inexperienced Lightning again took too many needless penalties, it was the Capitals who were caught short. Jagr was called for roughing and Klee was caught elbowing Dave Andreychuk in the head in overtime.

After the winning goal, the first in 11 power-play chances in the series for the Lightning, the fans vented their frustration at the officials by littering the ice with bottles and other items.

In Boston, Dan McGillis scored twice as Boston finally beat Martin Brodeur and New Jersey, driving the goalie from the game and staying alive.
AP

SPORTSWATCH

De Dios prevails

TARLAC CITY—Nico Riego De Dios of Olongapo City defeated Christian Cuarto, 7-5, 6-4, to capture his second straight boys' 18-under title yesterday in the First City Sunrise Junior Championships at the Sunrise Tennis Club covered courts. Patrick Arevalo demolished Roman Floreza, 6-0, 6-0, for the boys 12-under plum, while Nikki Manalo bagged the girls' 14-under over Trudy Amoranto, 6-2, 6-3. Maika Jae Tanpoco defeated Clarice Patrimonio, 6-0, 6-0, for the unisex 10-under title.

Siso double champ

CEBU CITY—Bernardine Siso pulled off a double whammy yesterday after downing Maasin's June Montalbo, 6-4, 6-2, and sister Sally Mac Siso, 6-1 (ret.), to win the boys' 12-under and unisex 10-under titles, respectively, in the 8th Gullas Junior Tennis Cup at the Sancase Tennis Club and Cebu Country Club here. Francis Largo won the boys' 14-under, Christian Canlas boys' 16-under, Janjie Soquino boys' 18-under, Julie Jopia girls' 12-under, Jin Querubin girls' 14-under, Floreza Alesna girls' 16-under and Michelle Panis in the girls' 18-under categories.

Summer tennis camp

THE SECOND Varsity Volleys-Prince Summer Tennis Camp will be held April 23-May 23 at the Valle Verde Country Club in Pasig City. Top varsity coaches Karl Santamaria (UST), Roland Kraut (DLSU), Dennis Sta. Cruz and Randy de Guzman (Ateneo) will conduct lessons for munchkins (8 years and below) and beginners (7:30-9 a.m.), intermediate and advanced (9-11 a.m.) every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. Night sessions (6-8 p.m.) are held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Aspiring high school and collegiate varsity players are invited to join the camp also supported by Accel and Nassau. Interested parties may contact Mercy (742-0394 and 722-6578), Karl (0920-745-2180) and Randy (0917-5292371).

Laguna marathon

A TOTAL purse of P300,000 will be at stake when the Laguna Invitational Marathon gets underway on June 8. Organized by the San Pedro Team Unified Sports Association of San Pedro, Laguna (SPTUSA), the marathon will pass eight key towns of Laguna, namely, Victoria–the starting line; Bay; Los Banos; Calamba; Cabuyao; Sta. Rosa; Biñan and will finish in San Pedro (Pacita Complex). The competition, the first of its kind in the country, will see runners in 42K, 10K and 3K crossing strategic towns all the way to the finish line in Pacita Complex. The 42k starts at 4:30 a.m. in Victoria; 10K in Sta. Rosa ;and the 3K in Biñan, respectively.

Isada wins anew

WINNING is becoming a habit for Ivan Isada. The Team Ultron standout posted his second straight victory in the Ultron Rallycross Series recently. The reigning national rallycross champion took a comfortable lead during the second heat in the RP 12 category and was untroubled despite attempts by more experienced drivers to beat his time of 1:24.07. Edgen Dy-Llacco finished second with a time of 1:24.97 in a Toyota Starlet while Team Blaze's Vip Isada placed third in a Honda Civic VTEX with 1:25.05. Ivan's second overall win, however, failed to move him into the top spot in the driver's standings. In the NCR 19 category, father Vip overtook Ivan by a wide six points. Kenneth Domlnado and Ivan are now tied for second place while Ivan's teammate Art Guevarra is third with nine points. Fernan Lao, Ken Diaz of Team Ultron and Samantha Santiago placed first in the novice, clubman and ladies categories, respectively.

FOUR DIGIT
9 2 7 6
(In exact order)

SUERTRES
8 9 4

MEGALOTTO 6/45
12 26 29 30 34 35

SPORTS
E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

NBA RESULTS
MIAMI 103, Toronto 99; Indiana 109, New York 93; Chicago 115, Philadelphia 106; Houston 97, Memphis 86; Portland 120, Phoenix 102; LA Lakers 126, Denver 104. *AP*

ALL-FILIPINO CUP

Express repulse Beermen, 91-81

GAMES SUNDAY *(Araneta Coliseum)*
4 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Red Bull
6:30 p.m.—Ginebra vs Shell

By June Navarro

THE FEDEX Express were used to wearing long faces after every energy-sapping battle against the San Miguel Beermen.

Things finally changed last night and it took a trigger-happy Renren Ritualo to do it as the Express pulled off their first-ever win over the Beermen, 91-81, in the Philippine Basketball Association.

"Nothing really special. We just worked within the system with Renren and Vergel (Meneses) delivering the goods for us," said FedEx coach Derrick Pumaren after the Express scored their only victory against the Beermen in four meetings overall.

Ritualo cemented his status as the Express' fourth-quarter man, pumping 14 of his 17 points in the final stretch as they jacked up their record to 5-5, an unstable position but safe enough from the reach of Group A tailender Purefoods (4-7).

"I've gained the experience of giving my team a boost at crunch time during my La Salle days. At the same time, coach Derrick has given me the authority to shoot freely from the outside," said Ritualo, who gave the Green Archers three consecutive titles in the UAAP.

Meneses, the Express' scoring chief and leader on the floor, exploded in the third quarter, delivering 15 of their 19 points in that span before leaving everything at the hands of Ritualo in the end game.

"Basically, it's the trust of coach (Derrick) which motivates us to work harder. He always gives us the go-signal to take over when needed," said Meneses, the league's MVP in 1995.

With the Express win, the Bert Lina-owned franchise has left the Talk N Text Phone Pals as the only team they have not beaten since joining the PBA last season.

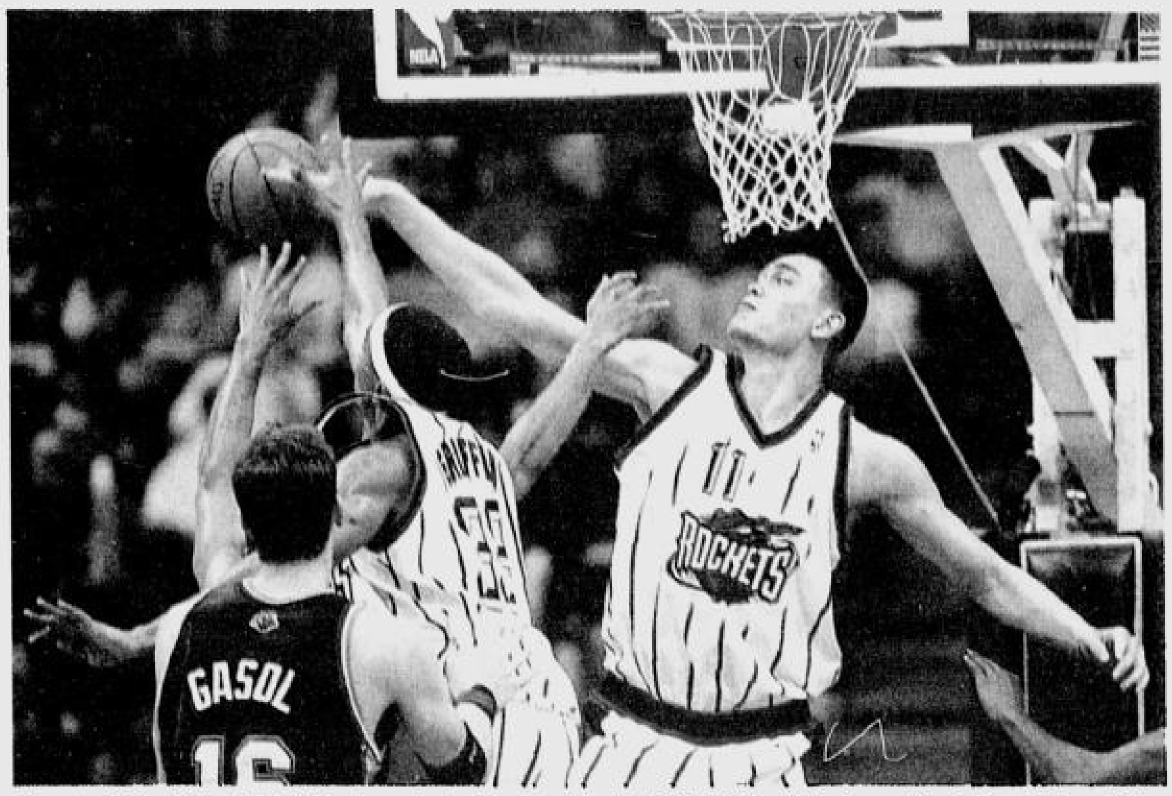
Talk N Text coach Joel Banal earned his first coaching victory in the PBA at the expense of the Sta. Lucia Realtors, 84-77, in the second game. The Phone Pals picked their fifth win after 10 games while the Realtors slipped to 5-6.

The Beermen, who have alternately won and lost close games in their past outings, registered their fifth defeat after 10 games that put them in a tie with the Express in the stiff race for the Samsung-PBA All Filipino Cup crown.

Scores:

FEDEX 91—Meneses 24, Ritualo 17, Codiñera 10, Arboleda 9, Ferriols 8, Ejercito 8, De Ocampo 7, Billones 6, Yap 2, Rodriguez 0.

SAN MIGUEL 81—Belasco 21, Hontiveros 16, Gahol 12, Peña 12, Racela 9, Victoria 6, Mente 3, Gamboa 2, Legaspi 0, Moody 0.



Houston's Yao Ming (right) blocks a shot while teammate Eddie Griffin (33) chases the ball and Memphis's Pau Gasol (16) watches during their NBA game yesterday. Houston won, 97-86. AFP

Bulls hand Nets Atlantic title

CHICAGO— Eddy Curry made his first eight shots on his way to a career-high 31 points, and Jamal Crawford matched his career best with 33 as the Chicago Bulls beat the Philadelphia 76ers 115-106 Tuesday.

The Bulls kept the 76ers from clinching home-court advantage in the first round of the playoffs and also handed New Jersey the Atlantic Division title.

It was the third straight loss for the 76ers, who dropped into a tie with Indiana for third place in the Eastern Conference. Both teams wrap up their regular seasons Wednesday night, and the Pacers have the edge in the tiebreaker if the teams wind up with the same record.

A loss Wednesday could drop Philadelphia as low as fifth in the East.

Allen Iverson scored 42 points and the 76ers outrebounded the Bulls 37-29. But it wasn't enough to offset their cold shooting. Philadelphia shot just 38 percent from the floor. *AP*

Superal wins by 39 shots

By Jong Arcano

A STRUGGLING windup denied him of what could have been something for the record books but Wolen Juan Superal won boys Class D by a big margin just the same in the Samsung Jungolf Tour at the Faldo course of the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in General Trias, Cavite.

Superal was on course for his third straight sub-par score as the chubby son of a teaching pro went three under going into the final corner. He, however, bogeyed his 16th hole, parred the next before stumbling with a double bogey on the last hole.

Had Superal at least bogeyed the 18th, he could have made it as the first jungolfer in recent memory to finish a tournament with three consecutive rounds under par. His six-under 210 effort for 54 holes nevertheless gave him his third straight victory in the summer, far ahead of Migs Arevalo (87-249).

Debbie de Villa provided the excitement that was missing in the other divisions when she nipped Bambi dela Paz by one in the girls Class C of the tourney backed by Philippine Airlines, Airlift Asia, Global Lighting, Air Liquide and Exito Mfg. Wilson is the equipment sponsor.

De Villa, one of three sisters playing in the circuit, benefited from a double par by dela Paz on the ninth hole and held her ground in the back nine to post a one stroke victory. De Villa scored a 92 while dela Paz closed out with a 93 for 268 and 269 totals, respectively.

Winning the titles in the other divisions were Aran Olea and Remijin Camping in Class A, Mike Yee and Geleen Handog in Class B, Bren Sumampong in boys Class C, Isabella Pineda in girls Class D and Bino dela Paz and Sun Mi Huang in Class E.

The tour takes a break in deference to the Holy Week before resuming with the Junior World qualifying at Southwoods and Riviera next week.

Olea's 80-243 gave him a four-shot win over Nonoy Negrido, Camping's 82-246 put her far ahead of Pauline Ponciano (99-298), Sumampong (87-258) finished two up on Anejo Asistio (90-260) and Pineda won by eight over Farah Monsalve with a 110-339. Bino dela Paz (81-249) and Sun, daughter of a Korean expatriate, ruled their divisions with plenty to spare.

Yee rallied with an 81-283 to beat the fancied Tonton Asistio by three while Handog turned in her best score in three days of 86 for 271 and the biggest winning margin in the tourney of 104 strokes.

SUPERAL exults after holing out. JESS YUSON

Ranidel top MVP aspirant

By Roy Luarca

BETTER than his brother.

That's the consensus of basketball fans who've seen Ranidel de Ocampo play in the Sunkist-PBL 2003 Unity Cup.

Quite a compliment, considering that the brother being referred to is Yancy de Ocampo, named one of the league's top 20 players and currently carving his name with the FedEx Express in the PBA.

Certainly, Ranidel deserves the praises.

Steady and deadly during the classification stages, the six-foot-five John-O stalwart is the leading contender for this year's Most Valuable Player plum.

Ranidel, already a back-to-back MVP awardee of the National Inter-Collegiate Basketball Championships, boasts 189 points after earning 129 points on statistics and 60 points on won games.

He's the league's fourth best in scoring averaging 15.6 points a game, fourth in rebounds with 8.6 and even made it seventh among the best three-point shooters with a high 46-percent clip or six of 14 attempts.

"Idol ko rin si Kuya (Yancy) and I'm grateful that the PBL also gave me the chance to shine, *kaya naman lalo ko pang pinagbubuti. Siguro kung makukuha ko ang* MVP, that will be the best reward for my efforts," said Ranidel.

Hapee's Rich Alvarez is close behind in second with 184 points, gaining 109 points on statistics and 75 on won games.

The Ateneo Blue Eagle is second best off the boards, with 10 rebounds per game aside from an average of 6.7 points and 1.8 steals.

But the biggest threat so far is Nutrili-cious banger Nelbert Omolon who chalked up 181 statistical points.

The 6-foot-3 Omolon is the No. 1 league scorer with 19.4 points, No. 1 in blocks with 2.8, the best in field goals with a 66-percent clips (33-of-50) and seventh in rebounds with 7.6.

Jordan's journey

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

"ALL I dare hope is that if, in executing this task, I have been too much swayed by a grateful remembrance of former instances, or by an affectionate sensibility to this transcendent proof of the confidence of my fellow citizens, and have thence too little consulted my incapacity as well as disinclination for the weighty and untried cares before me, my error will be palliated by the motives which mislead me, and its consequences be judged by my country with some share of the partiality in which they originated."

The above was by George Washington, the first American president. It formed part of his first inaugural address to the American people delivered on April 30, 1789.

I quote Washington today in the wake of Michael Jordan's farewell game on Tuesday as an NBA player, which was held at the American seat of government named after Washington himself–Washington in the District of Columbia.

Washington, the greatly respected commander of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, is considered the greatest American president ever.

Jordan, perhaps the only cager with moves that can never be copied, is arguably the greatest basketball player of all time.

Washington's speech could well be Jordan's, too. A farewell speech, that is.

For, in "executing his task" to resurrect himself from retirement and become an NBA player again as a Washington Wizard, Jordan was swayed by "an affectionate sensibility" of the confidence his fellow Americans had bestowed upon him despite the onslaught of Father Time.

You are old in basketball if you are 38. Jordan is 40 years old now. Yet, in his farewell game Tuesday in Washington D.C., he scored 21 points and had 8 rebounds. Those were numbers usually done by players much younger than Jordan.

Jordan and the Wizards lost that game to the New York Knicks but that's not what mattered. What mattered was, Jordan, in dishing out his usual high-impact game, was given an ovation for 2 minutes and 45 seconds as he sat on the bench after he left the game with 2:02 to play. It was an ovation like no other, unleashed by a packed crowd at the 20,000-seat MCI Center that watched America's most famous piece of athletic art play his last game on Washington soil.

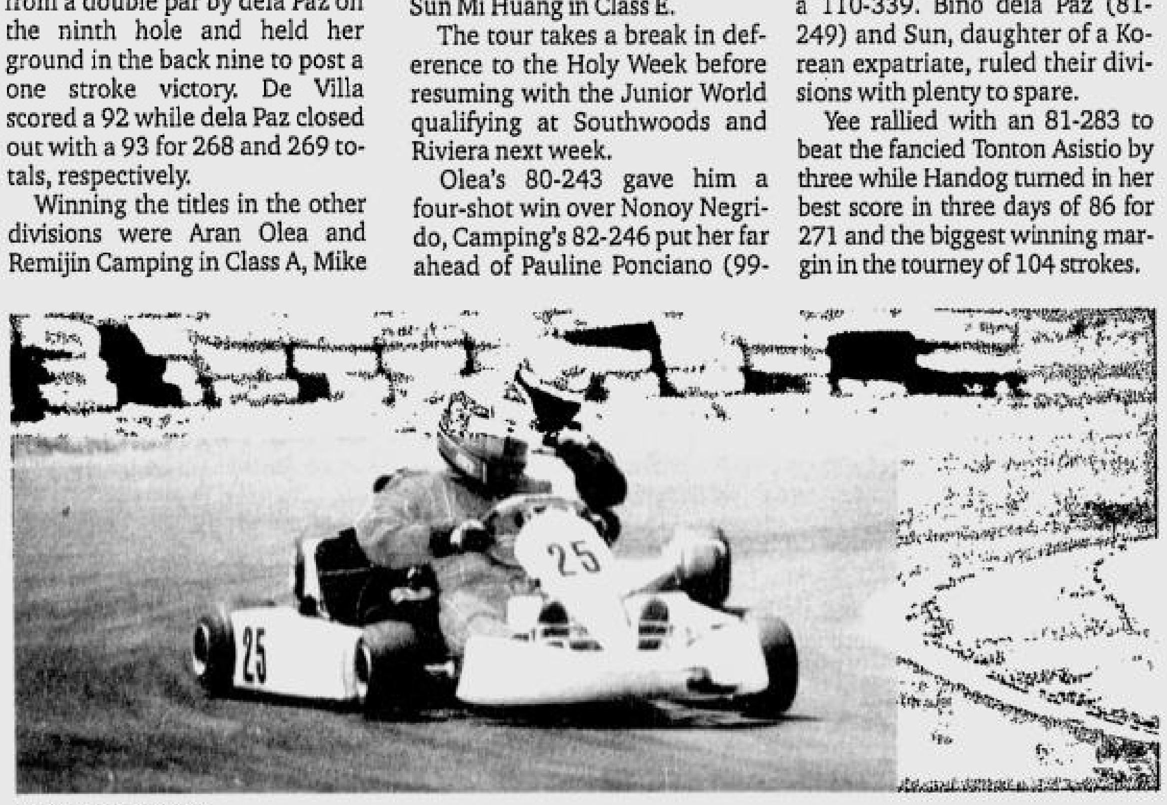
When Jordan decided to come back a second time from retirement in 2001, the cynics had a grand time ostracizing His Airness. Little did they know that Mr. Tongue was up to the occasion. For Jordan, he had Bernard Baruch's famous line when he donned his jersey 23 anew at age 38: "To me, old age is always 15 years older than I am." So that today, both the sixtyish Jake Ayson and Hermie Rivera are celebrating their 45th or something birthday.

Jordan may have failed to bring Washington to the playoffs, but he brought the Wizards to global consciousness and helped the team sell-out all 82 home games the past two seasons–a record. If that's not something to crow about, what is?

I say to you there are so few who know the art of growing old gracefully. That is as true as the hue of a rainbow and Jordan, the owner of six NBA championship rings as a Chicago Bull, has mastered that, too. Done in amazing grace yet.

Jordan will never fade into the sunset. The sunset will–with him. Even that, I guess, can never be copied by anyone, save perhaps by an alien.

If ever there is one.



TOP KARTER

Tuason Racing Project lead driver JP Tuason (No. 25 in red race suit) swept three races of the Formula Rotax class in the kickoff leg of the 2003 Shell Super Karting Series at the Carmona Circuit Philippines. The former Karter of the Year clocked 21:38.866 in the final heat, just 3.882 seconds ahead of Lee Bumgarner.

Quisay, Minas rule Baguio 10K run

HOMETOWN bets Alex Quisay and Marychiel Minas taking advantage of the national team's absence ruled their respective divisions in last Sunday's Pharmaton 10K Run held in Baguio City. Defending champion Eduardo Buenavista, SEA Games titlist Roy Vence, former Milo Marathon king Allan Ballester, women's national marathon record holder Cristabel Martes, were not allowed to participate by the Patafa to avoid injuries.

Quisay clocked 38 minutes and 38 seconds while Marson Tarcelo and Alunes Pudes timed 38:44 and 39:13 to pocket second and third places respectively. In the distaff side, Minas led from the start to emerge champion i 47:56. Libranda Tamson was sec ond in 50:27 with Michell Chung-ao salvaging third plac in 50:44.

Race director Raffy Uytiepo to gether with city sports coordinato Edison Villafuerte, Pharmaton' Manny Curtina and Samsung' Rose Hilario awarded the prizes.

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METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

Big backlash vs barangay heads

HOLY WEEK VACATION
MEMBERS of the Philippine National Police and the Philippine Coastguard maintain peace and order at the port in Manila South harbor, which has been swamped by passengers off to the provinces for the long weekend. Security was tight also in bus stations and other transport terminals.
ERIK ARAZAS

Pandacan groups bewail 'turnaround' on oil depot case

By Jerome Aning

GROUPS pressing for the removal of the Pandacan fuel depot yesterday accused the big three oil companies of "exploiting the destitution of the people of Pandacan" even as barangay chairs in the district backed the retention of the oil facility in the district.

The United Front to Oust the Oil Depot and the Pandacan Neighborhood Association are gathering signatures for a petition opposing the chairs' decision to allow the depot to stay.

Some 6,000 residents have signed the counter-petition, said UFO-OD convenor, lawyer Vladimir Alarique Cabigao.

Cabigao faulted the barangay chairs' interpretation of what is the general welfare of their constituents, saying that the chairs regard the economic well-being of their constituents as more important than the safety issues involving the depot.

In the position paper submitted by the barangay chairs to the City Council last month, the barangay officials cited legal and socio-economic reasons for the retention of the depot. The position paper was signed by 42 of the 43 barangay chairs in the district.

The barangay officials said many residents work in the depot or have put up businesses like eateries for depot workers.

The chairs also said that they were satisfied with the security and safety measures being imposed in the facility by the oil firms.

The oil firms are also generous donors in many livelihood projects, charities and special events in the district.

But Cabigao said many of the chairs are themselves economically dependent on the oil companies "so we can't expect them to bite the hand that feeds them."

"We are not willing to lay our heads on the block for the benefit of those who are economically dependent on the depot because we put a greater value on our right to life than to the economic right of the few who will be displaced in the event that the oil depot is removed," said a manifesto of the anti-depot groups.

Cabigao said the area that the oil depot occupies would be converted into an economic zone, which will benefit Pandacan residents.

"Jobs that will be lost with the removal of the depot would be replaced and the area would be developed in harmony with a sound urban planning," he said.

Cabigao also lambasted the oil companies for allegedly using threats of oil price hikes and supply shortages to prolong their stay in Pandacan.

Arson being used to drive away squatters along railroad tracks?

By Christian V. Esguerra

RAILROAD squatters yesterday expressed fear of what they called a new form of demolition: arson.

"We've been receiving information that arson is being used as a new form of demolition," said Don Pangan of the militant group Sanlakas which backs thousands of railroad squatters.

The squatters said they are afraid that the government might deliberately burn their shanties to clear the way for the rehabilitation of the national railway system.

At least three fire incidents in squatter communities in Quezon City beginning late last year involved pieces of disputed property, according to Pangan.

"Arson is the easiest way to drive away informal settlers," he told the INQUIRER. "So it won't be any surprise if one of our communities goes up in smoke one of these days."

Families whose shanties obstruct railroad tracks in Metro Manila are now on alert against people who might infiltrate their communities.

They conduct background checks on newcomers to determine if they have relatives in the area or if they are one of the so-called "professional squatters," according to Pangan.

Family of 6 trapped in Pasay fire

By Christian V. Esguerra

A FAMILY of six, including a 6-month-old baby, perished in a huge fire that razed at least 47 houses in a congested area in Pasay City early yesterday morning.

Found amid the ruins of their two-story house were Adelina Pascua, 51, her children Dolores, 32, Philip, 14, and Mary Jane, 23, and Mary Jane's children, John Dave, 3, and Mark Gerald, 6 months.

John Dave was charred to death while the rest died of suffocation, said fire investigator SFO1 Alfredo Delfin Jr.

Authorities have yet to determine what actually caused the fire. But residents said they first noticed thick smoke coming from the ceiling of a three-story house near the Pascua residence at around 2 a.m.

Flames immediately engulfed neighboring houses in Barrio Pilipino in Tramo and raged for about three hours.

Witnesses told investigators that the Pascuas panicked when clouds of smoke began creeping into their house.

2 sons of Cainta councilor held for Parsons rob case

By TJ Burgonio

TWO SONS of a Cainta councilor have been arrested in connection with the twin robbery attempts at the home of singer-actor Sonny Parsons in Marikina City.

Agents of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group arrested brothers Romeo and Michael Sicat during a raid on their "lair" in Barangay San Andres, Cainta, Rizal, at around 12:30 a.m. Tuesday.

The brothers, sons of councilor Bert Sicat, were believed to be leaders of the Sicat robbery gang, which gained notoriety for stealing motorcycles in Rizal, officials said at a press briefing.

The two brothers, however, claimed that their arrest was "political harassment."

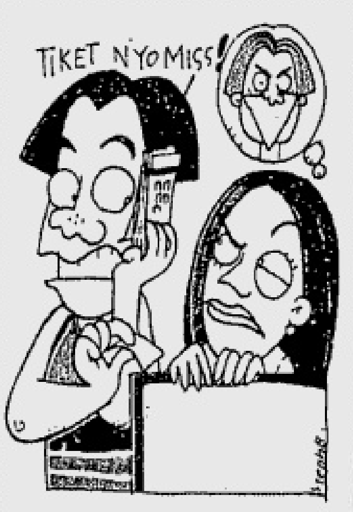
Parsons, who was present at the briefing, said that the 32-year-old Romeo resembled the man who drove the get-away vehicle of the band which barged into his home in Marikina last July and early this year in a series of robbery attempts.

He killed three of the suspects during a shootout in the first incident.

CIDG agents were able to trace the whereabouts of the suspects based on the conduction sticker number of the suspects' get-away car provided by Parsons and information furnished by civilians, said Chief Insp. James Brillantes.

When presented to the media, Romeo and his 27-year-old brother, Michael, however, denied the charges.

"This is politics. This is the first time I saw Mr. Parsons," said the bearded Romeo. "This is far from the truth. Mr. Parsons is my idol," added his brother.


TIKET N'YO MISS!

Next time, remember their faces

By Leila B. Salaverria

IT WAS a good thing that Melanie S. Almogela never forgot the faces of the men who robbed her on Sunday.

She chanced upon them in another bus on Tuesday night, and got the authorities catch them.

Suspects Arnel Fernandez, a 25-year-old driver, and Rodel Ramirez, a 20-year-old conductor, are now in jail. Recovered from them was the victim's cell phone.

PO2 Raymund Bilgera said that Almogela, a 33-year-old casino employee, was first robbed inside a bus that was traveling along the Ayala flyover on Sunday.

Before reaching the flyover, Almogela noticed that the bus was not picking up passengers anymore. Then Ramirez turned off the lights while Fernandez, who pretended to be a passenger, sat beside her and poked a knife at her.

Fernandez then grabbed

NEXT TIME/A16

Radio reporter escapes death in Sta. Cruz holdup

By Philip C. Tubeza

A FEMALE radio reporter became the news herself when three men robbed her of her cell phone then tried to stab her in Sta. Cruz, Manila yesterday morning.

Radio Mindanao Network reporter Grace F. Vergel, 22, of Binondo, Manila was on her way to work and waiting for a jeepney at Plaza Lacson in Sta. Cruz at 5:45 a.m. yesterday when the suspects struck, said Insp. Bagtas Opriasa, head of the Western Police District-Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit.

But police managed to nab one of the suspects, who was later identified as Ryan A. Aliarte, 31, of 65 Pampanga St., Tondo, Manila.

Vergel told police that her cell phone had rang and she answered it. But one of the suspects hugged her and grabbed her cell phone from behind.

The suspect then pulled out a knife and was about to stab her when a jeepney stopped near them.

Making a living out of icons and crucifixes

By Anne Luisa E. Villarico

MS JOVI Feliciano (left) attends to one of her customers.
ANNE LUISA VILLARICO

GOOD Friday brings brisk business to Jovi Feliciano who makes a living alongside fortune tellers and herb vendors.

Feliciano, 52, sells religious images, crucifixes and candles on the busy streets of Hidalgo in Quiapo, Manila.

Customers flock to buy from her religious images that would further heighten the somber mood of the Lenten season, says Feliciano, whose stall stands near the Quiapo church which draws religious fanatics from all over the metropolis.

Feliciano grew up in Quiapo to parents who also made a living by selling religious items. She herself started selling sculptured images after she graduated from high school. She was only 17.

"I was a self-supporting student then, I would sell in the morning and attend classes by 5 in the afternoon," she narrates.

At a nearby college, Feliciano enrolled in a two-year secretarial course, but she married Eduardo Feliciano before she could finish the course. Feliciano then decided to go into business full time.

The business has made enough money for her to be able to send her four children to school, says Feliciano.

Three of her kids are already married and have children of their own, except for Jeremy, her youngest, who had just graduated from high school.

Feliciano says her day starts at 6 in the morning. Together with her husband, she would tend her stall standing under a huge umbrella to shield herself and her images from the heat. If it rains, she would cover the images with a blanket. It has been this way for Feliciano for 30 years now.

The prices of her goods vary—from P350 to as high as P2,500 for a large image of the Black Nazarene.

Feliciano says that she orders some of her items from dealers in Masantol, Pampanga, and images made of wood from the town of Paete in Laguna.

Through the years, Feliciano has made a lot of regular customers, mostly devotees of the Black Nazarene, who come to Quiapo to fulfill religious vows.

"The image of the Black Nazarene and crucifixes sell fast because these are popular with devotees," Feliciano says.

Sometimes, customers would look for images of less popular saints, like Sta. Lucia, patron saint of people suffering from eye ailments. If she does not have the image and the customer is willing to wait, she would order it from her supplier.

"*Pag walang benta, pasensya* (Tough luck if I don't make a sale)," Feliciano says.

But Fridays are good days for her, especially the first Friday of the month, which is when devotees flock to Quiapo church.

Does she pray before the images she sells?

"Yes," Feliciano says without hesitation. "Being a Roman Catholic, our altar is complete with saints."

She stresses the importance of having saints in the house especially during the Lenten Season for the traditional "pabasa."

Although she has few regrets in life, Feliciano still longs to be an office girl and maybe work in an air-conditioned environment and not under the sweltering heat of the sun. But she says that she is already content with what she has and what she made of her life.

"*Tama na yung may darating sa 'min kahit konti lang, okay na* (It's enough that we make a little money)," she says.

'No left turn' policy set on 2 key Metro roads

By Leila B. Salaverria

AFTER what officials deem a favorable run at Edsa and several major intersections, the no left turn and no crossing policy of the Metro Manila Development Authority would be implemented along Quezon and Gil Puyat avenues.

This was according to MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno, who said the idea behind the implementation of the new traffic scheme is to ensure that the vehicular flow along the two avenues would be non-stop.

"The plan is to keep the traffic moving unobstructed," he said.

From the Elliptical road to the Welcome Rotunda stretch of Quezon Avenue, and from the Roxas Boulevard to Edsa stretch of Gil Puyat Avenue, motorists would be banned from turning left. Instead they would be made to use a U-turn slot to go to the next lane and then turn right on their original destination.

Vehicles coming from the perpendicular lane would also be banned from crossing intersections. Instead, they would be made to merge with the immediate lane, take the U-turn slot and then continue on their preferred roadway.

When this scheme takes effect, traffic lights will be virtually rendered useless, said Traffic Director Angelito Vergel de Dios.

He also said the program is still in its planning stage. The traffic director added that the MMDA and the Public Works and Highways department are studying the expansion of Quezon Avenue and looking for the proper areas where the U-turn slots would be placed.

Vergel de Dios also said the no left turn and no crossing policies have worked well for Edsa and other intersections where it was implemented, with traffic flow improving considerably when it was implemented in July last year.

Nacianceno said the MMDA is in the stage of conducting data gathering to quantify how much the traffic flow has improved.

Next time...

From page A15

the victim's cell phone, earrings and bracelet before alighting from the bus.

Almogela reported the incident to the police.

On Tuesday, she boarded a Guadalupe-bound bus in Pasay. As the conductor gave her a ticket, she noticed that he was trying to hide his face from her.

Startled, she observed him and realized that the conductor was Ramirez, the same man who was in cahoots with the one who robbed her. She then looked at who was driving the bus, and saw that it was the very same suspect who grabbed her belongings two days ago.

She then went down the bus and asked for help from the police, who caught up with the suspects along Ayala Avenue.

At the police station, authorities recovered Almogela's cell phone with her SIM card intact from Fernandez.

According to PO2 Bilgera, incidents where the bus driver and the bus conductor themselves were guilty of or were in cahoots with robbers are not unusual.

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CIVIL PROCEDURE)—Distinction between the jurisdiction of a court to modify its judgment and its jurisdiction to enforce its judgment—There is a distinction between the jurisdiction of a court to modify its judgment and its jurisdiction to enforce its judgment. The jurisdiction of the court to amend, modify or alter its judgment terminates when the judgment becomes final. This is the principle of immutability of final judgment that is subject to only few exceptions, none of which is present in this case. On the other hand, the jurisdiction of the court to execute its judgment continues even after the judgment has become final for the purpose of enforcement of judgment. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Carpio, First Division, Natalia Realty, Inc. v. Court Of Appeals (Former Ninth Division), G.R. No. 126462. Nov. 12, 2002]

DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, April 17

Holy Thursday

1st Reading:	Ex 12:1-8, 11-14
2nd Reading:	1 Cor 11:23-26
Gospel:	Jn 13:1-15

It was before the feast of the Passover. Jesus realized that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father, and as he had loved those who were his own in the world, he would love them with perfect love.

They were at supper and the devil had already put into the mind of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray. Jesus knew that the Father had entrusted all things to him, and as he had come from God, he was going to God. So he got up from table, removed his garment and taking a towel, wrapped it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing.

When he came to Simon Peter, Simon said to him, "Why, Lord, you want to wash my feet!" Jesus said, "What I am doing you cannot understand now, but afterwards you will understand it." Peter replied, "You shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you can have no part with me." Then Simon Peter said, "Lord, wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head!"

Jesus replied, "Whoever has taken a bath does not need to wash (except the feet), for he is clean all over. You are clean, though not all of you." Jesus knew who was to betray him; because of this he said, "Not all of you are clean."

When Jesus had finished washing their feet, he put on his garment again, went back to the table and said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also must wash one another's feet. I have just given you an example that as I have done, you also may do."

Commentary

Jesus' way of power and authority is the way of service and humility. The world rejected Christ because he had tried to show it a way different from what it had gotten used to, and different from the way it wanted to conduct itself. Where the world sought power, Jesus sought service. Where the world sought fame, Jesus sought lowliness and humility. Where the world sought wealth, Jesus sought poverty and oneness with the needy and oppressed. Jesus was a scandal to the values the world held dear. He had to go. But that is the way of all goodness. It is often vindicated after it has undergone much trial and pain. Jesus, in washing his disciples' feet shows us the way we should walk, if we are to be like him, if we desire to follow him, not only to the cross of Good Friday, but to the glory of Easter Sunday.

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: claret@cn1.net; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

THE Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard in Manila is being touted as the newest tourist spot and the most successful project so far of the urban renewal program of the city.

JESS YUSON

Celebrating Easter? Try the 'Baywalk'

By Jerome Aning

IF A trip out-of-town for the Easter holidays is out of the question, try the Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard for a cheap and convenient getaway for the long weekend.

The Roxas Boulevard Baywalk linear park is Manila's newest tourist attraction, and is an ideal recreation and leisure destination for the family, according to the city government.

Even President Macapagal-Arroyo has already been enamored by the Baywalk, which had attracted all sorts of people--from joggers to senior citizens, to tourists to artists.

Mayor Lito Atienza cannot stop talking of the popularity of the Baywalk, which he said is one of the best accomplishments of his Buhayin ang Maynila urban renewal program.

Park goers can sit on the seawall or on the benches to watch the famous Manila Bay sunset and enjoy the sea breeze.

The promenade now has granite and stone blocks flooring, and landscaping around the coconut trees. There are even swinging chairs at the southern portion of the park.

More important, the Baywalk is a very safe place, according to Atienza.

"It is a very safe place even at night, since we have installed bright multi-colored globe lights," he said.

The mayor said City Hall had leased portions of the park for outdoor cafes and snack kiosks.

He said the Baywalk is also a jump off point for other parks that families could stroll to, like the Rizal Park and Liwasang Bonifacio in the north, and the Paraiso ng Batang Maynila, Manila Zoo and Rajah Sulayman Park in Malate.

RI homecoming set on May 17

BALIKBAYAN alumni of Batch 1963 of the Rizal Institute in Canlubang, Laguna are expected to come home to attend their grand alumni homecoming at the school campus on May 17.

Dubbed "Spirit of '63 Lives On," the grand homecoming will be the first for members of Batch 1963 after 40 years, and organizers of the event have lined up a number of activities for the day.

For more details, call 049-5491917 or 049-5492714.

1 more dead in Marikina drug war

By Nelson F. Flores

ANOTHER man was yesterday killed in what Marikina police believe is an ongoing war between two drug syndicates operating in the city.

The killing has brought to three the number of victims of the supposed drug war in the last four weeks.

Police said the victim died from several gunshot wounds in the head and body. He was clad in white T-shirt, black denim shorts, black belt marked with Mario Balet, and was shod in white slippers.

Police described the victim as about 5-foot-5 tall, fair complexioned and slim. He has a heart-shaped tattoo in the right leg.

A silver ring, green lighter, a white towel marked with "Bobby," and a deformed slug from what could be a .9 mm. pistol were found on the victim, police said.

Police said pedestrians had found the body at 7:30 a.m. near the Tumana riverbank in Barangay Concepcion Uno, which is notorious for drug trafficking.

Witnesses also told police they heard gunshots in the area about 8 hours before the body was found.

Two weeks ago, suspected drug dealer Jimmy Espanola, 32, was shot dead in Sitio Tumana with a .9 mm. pistol, which police believe could be the same gun used in killing Maria Hanzen, another suspected drug dealer. Hanzen was found shot to death a week before Espanola's body was discovered.

SENAKULO IN PASIG

Samahang Senakulista ng Sta. Teresa de Avila of Barangay Pineda, Pasig City presents Via Crusis-Live, in the streets of Barangay Pineda and Barangay Kapitolyo on Good Friday, April 18. The Virgin Mary is played by Joyce Ann de Leon and Lord Jesus by Al Lirio with Mrs. Annie de Leon as director. The folktheater troupe which has preserved the tradition of cantada and hablada was founded in 1974 by Filomeno and Josefina de Leon with CCP Awardee Naty Crame Rogers as consultant.

A big puzzle for QC cops

By Alcuin Papa

QUEZON City police are still puzzled over the disappearance of some P800,000 worth of medical equipment which seemed to have vanished into thin air the other day.

Rolando Dy, 45, a representative of Marsman Drysdale Medical Products Inc., appeared before Central Police District Criminal Investigation Unit yesterday to file a complaint on the disappearance of the equipment.

According to Dy, the equipment were taken from the University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Hospital in Sta. Mesa to be repaired.

Employees of the company loaded the equipment into a delivery van (UAV-981) to take the equipment to the main office.

However, unidentified suspects waylaid and took the van while being driven in New Manila in Quezon City.

Do we hate foreigners?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SOMETHING should be done to make life bearable inside the detention center at the Bureau of Immigration so we won't be accused of being a nation of xenophobics. A xenophobic is one has great hatred for foreigners.

A foreigner who has been inside the BID detention center told me the jail is very congested. This foreigner said that there were 250 detainees inside cells that can accommodate only 60 people.

We should treat foreign detainees with more compassion than those inside our city and town jails. The crime that most of these foreigners has committed is overstaying in the country.

* * *

It just so happens that not being able to leave the way country way past the date set by the BID for his departure is a crime on the part of a foreigner.

Most of these foreigners have become so enamored of the Philippines and its people they don't want to leave.

Is it a crime to be a stranger in a country that you have come to love?

* * *

A few days ago, a Singaporean, Dennis Ng or Sia Hwee, 44, died inside the BID detention center, according to an inside source.

The cause of death was not known but the body was taken to the Ospital ng Makati for autopsy.

At the request of his Filipino wife, Ng's body was to be cremated.

Ironically, it was at the instance of his wife that Ng was detained at the BID jail, according to my source.

* * *

We should not be like Saudi Arabia that treats foreigners like rubbish.

I've talked to a lot of our countrymen who have worked, or are still working, in that desert kingdom about how foreign workers are treated there.

Although the pay is good, a foreign worker in Saudi has to have the stomach to bear the humiliation of being treated like an outcast.

* * *

In Saudi Arabia, when a foreigner gets run over by a car driven by its citizen, it's a waste of time for him to file charges against him in court.

The Saudi court will almost always rule in favor of the Saudi driver even if he was reckless.

Why? Because the judge will say that if the foreigner didn't come to Saudi, he wouldn't have met an accident!

If you don't believe me, try asking a Filipino who has worked in Saudi.

* * *

A friend who once worked for Saudi Airlines or Saudia as a flight stewardess told me of the bias that country has against foreigners.

My friend will never forget that bitter experience. It was her day off from work so she decided to shop at a flea market the natives call "souk."

While she was looking over some items, she felt that somebody at the back, a male, was nudging her behind. She said she could feel his hard "instrument."

* * *

Frightened, she left the store in a hurry without as much as looking behind her.

But the maniac followed her to another store and persisted in nudging her behind with his "royal hardness.".

She said she got hold of an insect repellent and sprayed the man's face with its contents. This was after she felt wetness at her back.

* * *

The Arab man cried in pain and ran away.

He came back with the religious police. He said my friend was molesting him. Without asking for her side, they forced her to go with them to their station.

Only after much explaining and showing proof that the Arab man was at fault did the police let her go.

And what was her proof? The man's semen.

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People, Events & Products

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Editor Aries Espinosa

'Text-savvy' RP techies granted patents for SMS

PHILIPPINE-based Chikka Asia Inc. and affiliate Bidshot, the country's leading mobile messaging and wireless services companies, confirmed they have received patent grants from the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore. Patent grants are also expected shortly from the other countries signatory to the Patent Cooperation Treaty. Applications had in fact been filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty that extends patent protection to most major wireless markets, including the Philippines, and majority of European countries.

"Patents are an integral part of our investment in technology and our effort to establish the Philippines as a regional center for excellence in wireless applications development," said Dennis Mendiola, Chikka Asia Inc., chief executive officer.

The patented methods and systems are employed in Chikka's mobile-centric Instant Messenger, which connects PC users to cellular phones through text messaging or SMS (Short Message Service on GSM networks) and also in their other wireless applications and services. Chikka connects to all major Philippine GSM operators.

The announcement came at the heels of search reports confirming "no prior art" for Chikka's patent-pending "suffixing" technology. A "no prior art" search report strongly suggests an inventive and novel technology and is the precursor of an actual patent grant.

"Suffixing" refers to the attachment of dynamic indices, be they numeric or alphabetic characters to a basic access code such as in 27701 or 277KISS, wherein "277" is the main short code supplied by the GSM operator. A patent Chikka has filed says that depending on what a user texts to the main short code, the reply from its servers will have particular numbers attached to 277.

"This suffixing technology has allowed Chikka and Bidshot unparalleled creativity with plain SMS, making it (SMS) highly interactive. Thus, we have been able to adopt any successful model on the Net, like auction, instant messaging, Internet-related chat, or crush-dating, and bring them to the mobile texting world," said Mendiola.

The patents were first employed for the PC to mobile texting application Chikka Txt Messenger where a message coming from a PC user is identified as coming from a basic access code plus the Chikka ID or in the case of a mobile user, the basic access code plus the GSM mobile phone number. In fact, a GSM number used as ones PC log-on ID is the subject of yet another patent.

Earlier, Bidshot Dotcom, a Chikka affiliate, assigned these "virtual GSM numbers" to transactions and items being auctioned off and bidded upon by a community of buyers and sellers.

"The point has always been to give the mobile user more things to do through SMS while retaining the simplicity, intuitiveness and ease of use that has been at the very center of our love affair with text," said Mendiola.

The two companies have, in fact, ventured out of their original messaging and m-commerce platforms to exclusively employ these patented and patent-pending processes in mobile promotions and advertising, SMS-interactive TV and for corporate solutions such as text hotline and text radio.

A Singapore-registered subsidiary, Chikka Pte, Ltd., holds title to all of Chikka's intellectual property assets, including all international treaty and national patents, brand names, trademarks and service marks.

"Chikka" is Filipino slang for "small talk."

BARBIE WITH HEART ON HER BIRTHDAY

Barbie, the first and number one fashion doll in the world, will have Heart Evangelista, aka VJ Heart, on her birthday party in Toy Kingdom, SM Megamall on April 20 from 3 to 5 p.m. You won't only see Stylin' Pup Barbie and VJ Heart in person, but games and prizes are in store. Richwell Trading Corp., the exclusive distributor of Barbie in the country and organizer of all Barbie events, announces Stylin' Pup Barbie as the Summer Doll of 2003. Stylin' Pup Barbie will be expected to appear in all fashion show mall tours this summer. Watch out for print ads in all leading newspapers and selected weekly magazines. For more information about all upcoming events, call the marketing department at 732-5141 and look for Letty or Abe.

THE GREAT SCHOOL RAID XPRESS

Just before the finals season took over, schools recently got a pleasant surprise when a unique all-in-one caravan called The Great School Raid Xpress invaded their campus to bring them two days of cool gadgets, hot gimmicks and the most stylish of school garments. Among the participating schools were Ateneo, De La Salle, UP Manila, St. Scholastica's College, Miriam College and Assumption College. Leading the row of booths set up at the school grounds was Palmolive Naturals Mild Care Soap's tent. Sporty Campus bodies tested their strength and stamina at the wall climbing booth of Power Up and Alaxan. Romantic fun beckoned at Astring-O-Sol's Kissing Booth. Shown are the creative team of students of St. Scholastica's College. The girls of St. Scho came up with a 'World Peace' themed event.

'Catch up' growth for just 2 delicious glasses a day

WHY ARE some children lagging behind the growth curve?

Not all children achieve the normal height and weight gain that is appropriate at a certain age, particularly the ages 1 to 10. There are cases when growing up slows down at a certain point, termed as "growth faltering." Studies indicate 50 percent of children below 5 years old will experience growth faltering, so it is understandable that it becomes heartbreaking-and often baffling-for parents when they notice that their child is not growing up "ideally" in terms of height and weight despite their best efforts to supply their children with the necessary nutritive support.

There can be a multitude of reasons children fail to achieve their expected weight and height during their growing up years. Common concepts on genetics, where the children are supposed to "inherit" whatever genetic structure their parents have, is usually pointed to as the reason. But the most common reason is that children who are choosy with their food and who usually skip meals are also common victims of what is now called "stunted growth," making it sensible to say that lesser food and insufficient caloric intake results to this dilemma. Results of various researches are alarming, where it has been revealed that 43 percent of children in developing countries are growth stunted while 36 percent are underweight because of poor eating habits, most especially in children 3 to 7 years old.

Even active children who need high amounts of energy to sustain their active life may not be spared from stunted growth if not given the proper nutritional supplements. This is where catch-up growth becomes a necessary action.

Nutrition plays a big factor in addressing this alarming situation. Nutrition fuels the body, it sustains the energy needed by children as they go through their growing-up stage. The pace and development of their growth should be at a level that is appropriate to their age. The vitamins and minerals that their bodies need are the catalysts for their growth, so there is an essential need that food supplements, given to children who continue to be picky with the food they eat, should be packed with the most complete and balanced nutritional content to ensure proper growth and development.

For this purpose, Abbott Laboratories developed Pediasure, a complete and balanced nutritional supplement especially formulated for children aged 1 to 10 to help support growth, enhance immunity, and provide the essential nutrients for proper growth and development. Pediasure offers optimum nutrition for active children, "picky" eaters, who may suffer from nutritional imbalance because of inadequate diet due to frequent meal skipping, or decreased food intake or loss of appetite due to illness.

Pediasure has the highest caloric density, at 30 kcal per fluid ounce-which delivers faster weight gain in a shorter period of time compared to other formulas. Pediasure is the only one clinically proven to promote Catch-up Growth and helps reduce sickness. It comes in delicious vanilla and chocolate flavors, and can be used as meal replacement or nutritional supplement just by drinking two glasses a day. With Pediasure, Catch-up Growth can be achieved within eight weeks.

Pediasure is now available in leading supermarkets and drugstores nationwide. Ask your friendly doctor about Pediasure today.

C-Cubed raises funds for Knowledge Channel

CUSTOMER Contact Center Inc. (C-Cubed), one of the largest and the first and only ISO 9001: 2000 certified contact center in the country, has continued its efforts in helping the country's social growth by supporting the "Give Leaves 2002" program of Knowledge Channel.

The Knowledge Channel is an all-educational TV channel seen on cable (16 on Sky, 20 on Home) that produces programs geared towards enhancing and supporting the quality of education at the elementary and secondary schools. This undertaking is supported by a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Education and Sky Foundation Inc. (SFI) for the mandatory viewing of Knowledge Channel by public school children.

To date, the quality of grade school and high school students from public schools has been a cause of concern. This prompted the Knowledge Channel to seek the support of the private sector through its "Give Leaves to Knowledge" program, for them to be able to continue providing underprivileged grade school and high school students access to the program.

C-Cubed was among the first private companies to respond to the call as it encouraged it's employees to participate in the program by donating the cash equivalent of their leave credits to help raise funds for the program. This program aims to raise up to P15.7 million in funds.

"C-Cubed has always believed that growth starts from good education. This is a good opportunity for us and for our agents to share in our own little way in improving the education system in our country," said Gela Lagman, head of C-Cubed human resources division.

As a growing industry, call centers are great source of revenue and employment for the Philippines. This industry has generated jobs requiring an education curriculum focused in Math, Science, and most especially English, which is one of the inherent advantages in getting business for the call center industry in the Philippines.

"By supporting programs uplifting the educational standards of Filipinos, C-Cubed continues to steadily develop and expand the Philippines as the leading source for call center businesses," said Eckie Gonzales, C-Cubed president and CEO.

Bits Clips

AmCham's 1st student program

UNIVERSITY students will now have a chance to develop problem-solving skills in a real business environment, learning direct from the country's topnotch management professionals through the first AmCham Business Orientation Program. A brainchild of the American Chamber of Commerce, the program will be held from April 21 to 25 at the AmCham Hall, 2nd floor of the Corinthian Plaza, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. The program aims to offer qualified 3rd and 4th year college students an opportunity to understand key international business and economic issues via site tours and in-depth discussion with management professionals from leading international companies in Manila. Application forms have already been distributed to various Metro Manila universities.

Anno Domini Concepts at Target Mall, Laguna

Anno Domini Concepts, Inc. (ADCI), an exhibit and events organizer has recently renewed its exhibit contract for another year in the most popular mall in Sta. Rosa, Laguna - Target Mall. Target Mall's regular mallgoers will once again enjoy a wide array of budget friendly items ranging from RTW, Toys, Undergarments, Foot wears, Bags, Children's clothing, Home accessories among others at the ground floor center atrium, plus cellphones, cellphone accessories and fashion accessories and more at the second floor railings. Visit other ADCI exhibits located at Ever Gotesco Malls (Ortigas and Commonwealth) and Plaza Luisita Mall in Tarlac.

Samar National School grand reunion set April 21

THE 2003 Samar National School (formerly Samar High School) Grand Alumni Homecoming and Reunion will be held from April 21 to 27 at the school grounds in Catbalogan, Samar. The weeklong affair will be hosted by Class '77. Highlights of the affair are the parade of classes and their respective floats, testimonial dinner for the silver and golden jubilarians (classes 1978 and 1953, alumni ball, and beach party. As host, Class '77 will also donate books on information technology to the school library, conduct medical-surgical missions to the depressed and remote barangays of Catbalogan, hold a seminar on mushroom culture and a workshop on creative photography, and publish an alumni book titled "Dreams and Memories." For details, call Vilma T. Laurel at 373-9526 or 981-7297.

Product FILES

CULTURAL ICONS OF THE PHILIPPINES

RP cultural icons in book form

"CULTURAL Icons of the Philippines", a book that documents the origins, history behind these cultural icons from the pre-Hispanic period to the present is Visitacion "Chit" de la Torre's latest Filipiniana title.

The cultural icons are divided into several categories: material objects, food or beverages, tourist destinations, cultural traditions, and personalities. The book's last chapter features some prominent Filipinos and their own choices of cultural icons.

De la Torre has authored 23 books. The "Cultural Icons" book was designed by Bernard Fernando, art director of a Makati-based advertising agency and photographed by Roland Roldan, a freelance photographer.

Copies of "Cultural Icons of the Philippines" are available at the offices of Tower Book House, Windsor Tower, 163 Legaspi Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City. Call 815-4938, 815-6925.

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MAKATI SHANGRI-LA'S EGGHUNT PARTY

Kids frolic with Sesame Street characters

MAKATI Shangri-La offers Holy Week revelers an exciting line-up of Easter holiday activities for the whole family.

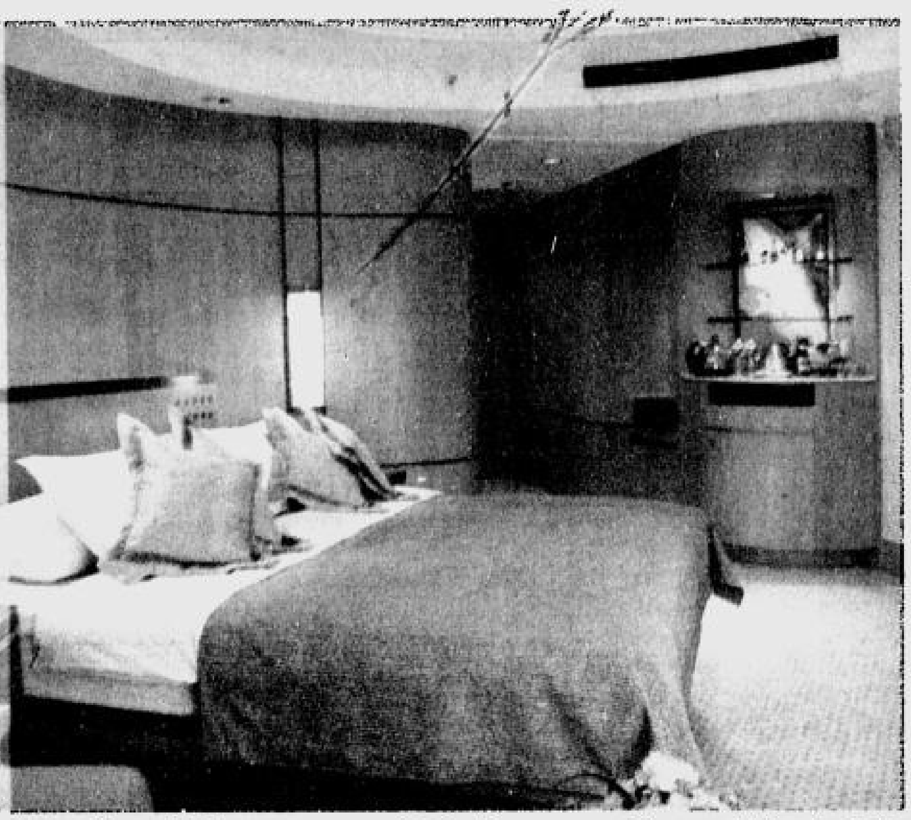
From April 5 to 21, local residents can take advantage of Makati Shangri-La's Easter Rate Break room package that lets them enjoy a 2-night stay in one of the hotel's superior rooms for only P6,000++. This package includes buffet breakfast for 2 persons at Island Café, a 20 percent discount on food and beverage and unlimited access to the swimming pool and the hotel's 24-hour health club. Reservations can be made by calling Makati Shangri-La's reservations hotline at telephone number 814-2525.

The hotel's Easter Sunday activities kicks off on April 20 with the Easter morning mass scheduled at 9 a.m. at the Manila Function room. Then its off to the Quezon Ballroom for the annual Easter Egg Hunt party where kids are left to frolic in a specially designated area in search of colorful Easter eggs while the rest of the family can partake of a sumptuous Easter Day Brunch consisting of international dishes. Lively family-style activities have also been scheduled through the morning such as magic shows, games, raffles and a Meet n' Greet session with Sesame Street's Elmo, Cookie Monster and Miffy the White Bunny. This Easter activity is priced at P780++ for adults and P480++ for children 10 years old and below.

Other dining options available this Easter week include:

All-You-Can Eat a la carte lunch menu at Inagiku featuring the restaurant's most popular dishes on Black Saturday, April 19. This offer is priced at P750++ for adults and P375++ for children 10 years old and below.

Easter Sunday activities include games, raffles and a magic show.



On Easter Sunday, Inagiku will feature a sumptuous Easter Sunday Lunch Buffet that includes a variety of sushi, sashimi, a selection of teppanyaki and the restaurant's famous tempura among many others at P1,095++ per person for adults and P575++ per person for children 10 years and below.

Island Café offers a wide array of seafood specialties from around the world for its daily buffet from April 17 to 20. Lunch is priced at P1,150++ per person for adults and P575++ for children 10 years old and below.

Lovers of chocolates and sweets may avail of Easter-inspired chocolate eggs, cakes and pastries at the Easter Corner located at the hotel's main lobby from April 13 to 20.

Mandarin Oriental Manila stages 'The Big Easter Circus'

ON APRIL 20, Mandarin Oriental, Manila and Globelines, in cooperation with Joey 92.3, present "The Big Easter Circus." Starting with an Easter Sunday mass in the Mahogany room at 9:00 a.m., the excitement shifts to the ballroom where all-time favorite circus characters – jugglers, clowns, magicians, stilt walkers, acrobats and mime artists strut their stuff and enthrall wide-eyed kids and kids-at-heart. Besides the traditional Easter egg hunt, other fun-filled activities awaiting Easter revelers include a tattoo and face painting corner, family treasure hunting, a kiddie fashion show, and a Beyblade arena. Brunch buffet tickets at its dining outlets start at P 980++ for adults and P650++ for children at the Tin Hau and The Brasserie, inclusive of passes for the egg hunt, circus show, and games.

Room packages are offered to local residents starting P2,800++ for a superior room inclusive of American breakfast at The Captain's Bar for two persons, and one egg hunt pass if booked April 19 to 20. A free room night comes with a two-night booking, or for two-room booking for an overnight stay. Rates do not include prevailing government tax and service charge. Room packages are valid until April 30 and offered to local residents only.

For inquiries and reservations, please call 750 888 ext 2305/2306.

Chill Out at The Conservatory

FROM Monday to Friday, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., let your senses guide you as you relax and groove to the latest chill-out and deep house tracks while enjoying bottomless San Miguel Beer for only P198++.

For inquiries, call The Conservatory of The Peninsula Manila at (63 2) 887-2888, extensions 2948 and 2958

Capturing Iloilo's rich allure

THE BARCELO Sarabia Manor Hotel and Convention Center truly captures Iloilo's unspoiled splendor. Famous for its rich culture, unique tradition and fluvial festivities, Iloilo never ceases to awe visitors with its vibrant colors and exciting history. The Barcelo Sarabia has become a landmark found at the heart of the city. Sitting on 1.5 hectares of land, it delightfully blends the manor-house atmosphere with the city's entrapping allure. It is the favorite hotel of most business travelers, local and foreign tourists, for two decades now and has earned the distinction of winning the Department of Tourism's 2000 Kalakbay Award for "Hotel of the Year for Western Visayas".

Each room is designed to give you unmatched comfort and satisfaction. Room amenities include IDD/NDD telephones with bathroom extension, cable television and complete bath amenities. Recreational facilities such as the Clark Hatch fitness center and an Olympic-size swimming pool are available for guests to enjoy.

Barcelo Sarabia also boasts world-class meeting facilities, from small private gatherings to the most extravagant receptions in the biggest ballroom in Ilollo. Being a popular venue for weddings, debut and prestigious social events, it brings dining standards to new and better heights.

Numerous specialty restaurants offer a wide selection of international and local cuisine. Guests can enjoy Suehiro, a Japanese restaurant, Bwana, an African-themed dining restaurant, Freddy's Grill and Café Salvatore providing live entertainment.

So come and discover the splendor, beauty and charm of the Barcelo Sarabia Manor Hotel and Convention Center. For inquiries call (632) 867-2952, fax (632)867-1476 or e-mail smxhotel@iloilo.net

Mactan's only airport hotel close to your hearts

BUSINESS travelers would find no other hotel as accessible to the Mactan International Airport than the Waterfront Airport Hotel. Being the city's only airport hotel, Waterfront Airport Hotel is ideally located in the historical island of Mactan, Cebu fronting the Mactan Cebu International Airport. It is 10 minutes away from the shopping center, 15 minutes from Mactan's white sandy beaches, and 30 minutes away from the Cebu City's financial district. It boasts of 167 luxurious sound proof deluxe rooms with awesome view of the nearby islands.

Delight in its 7 restaurants dishing out Filipino, International, Japanese and Chinese cuisine and bars and lounges with live entertainment in the evenings. Six multi-purpose function rooms are readily available for small meetings, seminars, to large conferences. Relax and experience the luxury of its international standard spa with 13 private rooms and the privacy of its own swimming pool.

The Waterfront Mactan is a short ride from the historical shrine of Lapu-Lapu, which only stands to remind of the Portuguese explorer Magellan's foiled conquest of the island, but also stands next to the center of delectable Cebuano cuisine. Here, restaurants overlooking the sea tempt taste buds with cooked-to-order SU-TO-KIL (sugba or grilled, tola or tinola and kilaw, thinly sliced raw fish soaked in vinegar, spices and fresh coconut milk). Nearby, there are beach resorts where you can rent a cottage for P200 for the entire day and reward yourself with a priceless panorama of Bohol's silhoutte.

So if you're traveling to Cebu armed with a wish list- a place near the beach, or just across the airport , and which offers both Cebuano hospitality and frivolity in a world class ambience, all of which define that wanting to feel at home, Waterfront offers such an experience. This commences with a hearty greeting of "*Maayong Pag-abot*" from a smiling hotel staffer opening Waterfront's doors for you.

ALL DIGITAL SOUND

AYALA CINEMAS

PRESENTS

	G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1	KANGAROO JACK	THE RECRUIT	ArtFilm ANGER MANAGEMENT (Advance Screenings) 11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 9:25	GUARANTEED SEATS THX ANGER MANAGEMENT (Advance Screenings) 12:40, 2:50, 5:00, 7:10, 9:20, 11:30	THX WHAT A GIRL WANTS (Advance Screenings)
2	NATIONAL SECURITY	NATIONAL SECURITY	WHAT A GIRL WANTS (Advance Screenings) 11:45, 1:45, 3:45, 5:45, 7:45, 9:45	GUARANTEED SEATS THX WHAT A GIRL WANTS (Advance Screenings) 12:40, 2:50, 5:00, 7:10, 9:20, 11:30	ANGER MANAGEMENT (Advance Screenings)
3	ANGER MANAGEMENT (Advance Screenings)	THX WHAT A GIRL WANTS (Advance Screenings) 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Onstage ACOUSTIC NIGHT OUT SERIES May 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30 & 31	GUARANTEED SEATS KANGAROO JACK 1:10, 3:10, 5:10, 7:10, 9:10, 11:10	THE WILD THORNBERRYS
4	WHAT A GIRL WANTS (Advance Screenings)	KANGAROO JACK		GUARANTEED SEATS THE RECRUIT 1:10, 3:45, 6:20, 8:55, 11:30	KANGAROO JACK
5		THE JUNGLE BOOK 2		GUARANTEED SEATS NATIONAL SECURITY 12:25, 2:35, 4:45, 6:55, 9:05, 11:15	NATIONAL SECURITY
6		ANGER MANAGEMENT (Advance Screenings)			
7		SOLARIS			

For sreening times, call 729-7777. Movies are subject to change without prior notice. Reserve your seats by texting **SURESEATS GB3** or **SURESEATS G4** and send to **2333**. Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

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Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DOLBY) WILD THORNBERRY
2 (SDDS) THE RECRUIT
3 (DTS) JUST MARRIED
4 GOLD (DTS ES) KANGAROO JACK
5 GOLD (DOLBY EX) THE CORE
6 GOLD (SDDS) NATIONAL SECURITY
7 GOLD (DOLBY EX) SOLARIS
8 JUNGLE BOOK (SNEAK PREVIEW)
9 WHAT A GIRL WANTS (SNEAK PREVIEW)
10 ANGER MANAGEMENT(SNEAK PREVIEW)

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486
1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE
3 (DTS) RESERVE
4 RESERVE
5 RESERVE
6 (DTS) RESERVE
Golden Pearl THX RESERVE

Masagana CINEMA 1 2 & 3
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 , 833.3274
1 SEX DRIVE
2 PALABAN
3 PARU-PARONG LIGAW

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 WHAT A GIRL WANTS (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 SEX DRIVE
3 WISH MASTER
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) THE CORE
5 VIRGIN PEOPLE

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 HAPPY HOURS
2 VIRGIN PEOPLE
3 SEX DRIVE
4 THE CORE
5 KANGAROO JACK
6 NATIONAL SECURITY

M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel 873.5004
1 DREAMCATCHERS
2 WILLARD

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) TEL. 8934225, 8922503
SOLARIS

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 JUST MARRIED
2 DREAMCATCHERTS

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL INC
tel 930.9515
1
2 PALABAN
3

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376
1 SEX DRIVE
2 PALABAN
3
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588
1 (SDDS) NATIONAL SECURITY
4 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE (SNEAK PREVIEW)
5 JUNGLE BOOK (SNEAK PREVIEW)
6 SEX DRIVE
7 (DTS) KANGAROO JACK
8 ANGER MANAGEMENT (SNEAK PREVIEW)
9 (DOLBY) SOLARIS

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508
2 RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 365.7928
1 JUNGLE BOOK (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE(SNEAK PREVIEW)
3 ANGER MANAGEMENT (SNEAK PREVIEW)
4 (SDDS) NATIONAL SECURITY
5 WHAT A GIRL WANTS (SNEAK PREVIEW)
6 (DOLBY) THE CORE
7 (DTS) KANGAROO JACK
8 THE RECRUIT
9 VIRGIN PEOPLE

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0082
1 WHAT A GIRL WANTS (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 JUNGLE BOOK (SNEAK PREVIEW)
3 (DTS) NATIONAL SECURITY
4 ANGER MANAGEMENT (SNEAK PREVIEW)
5 KANGAROO JACK

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795
1 ANGER MANAGEMENT (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 JUNGLE BOOK (SNEAK PREVIEW)
3 WHAT A GIRL WANTS (SNEAK PREVIEW)
4 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE (SNEAK PREVIEW)
5 (SDDS) THE CORE

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470
1 SEX DRIVE

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888
1 SEX DRIVE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson VIRGIN PEOPLE-3
Lords VIRGIN PEOPLE-3
Jennet RESERVE

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Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 VIRGIN PEOPLE
2 KANGAROO JACK
3 NATIONAL SECURITY
4 WHAT A GIRL WANTS (SNEAK PREVIEW)

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238
1 (DOLBY) KANGAROO JACK
2 THE CORE
3 ANGER MANAGEMENT (SNEAK PREVIEW)
4 SEX DRIVE
5 WHAT A GIRL WANTS (SNEAK PREVIEW)

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)
1
2

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 PALABAN
2 SEX DRIVE

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT **Araneta**

MALL CINEPLEX 7
tel 911.3101 loc. 821,8242,8400
1 SEX DRIVE
2 TEARS OF THE SUN
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) NATIONAL SECURITY
4 (SDDS) THE CORE
5 (DTS) KANGAROO JACK
6 SOLARIS
7 THE RECRUIT

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
tel 911.3101 loc. 821,8242,8400
1 SEX DRIVE
2 WILLARD

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
TEL. (049) 837-0926
1 THE CORE
2 SEX DRIVE
3 (DTS) KANGAROO JACK

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 WHAT A GIRL WANTS (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 (DTS) FINAL DESTINATION
3 (DOLBY) THE CORE
4 ANGER MANAGEMENT (SNEAK PREVIEW)

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 WHAT A GIRL WANTS (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 (DOLBY) KANGAROO JACK
3 (DTS) THE CORE
4 ANGER MANAGEMENT (SNEAK PREVIEW)

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 FINAL DESTINATION
2 CRADLE TO THE GRAVE
3 (DOLBY) TEARS OF THE SUN
4

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729
1 SEX DRIVE
2 THE CORE
3 (DOLBY) GANGS OF NEW YORK
4 (DTS) WILLARD

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305
1 (DOLBY) SEX DRIVE
2 (DTS) THE CORE
3 GANGS OF NEW YORK

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) PALABAN
2 PARU-PARONG LIGAW
3 (DTS) SEX DRIVE
4 VIRGIN PEOPLE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) THE CORE
2 SEX DRIVE
3 (DTS) WISH MASTER
4 JAILBIRD
5 FINAL DESTINATION

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 KANGAROO JACK
2 SEX DRIVE
3 SEX & ZEN

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 THE EYE
2 SEX DRIVE
3 SEX & ZEN

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 SEX DRIVE
2 TEARS OF THE SUN
3 (DTS) DREAMCATCHERS
4 (DOLBY) GANGS OF NEW YORK

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808
1 (DTS) RESERVE
2 (DTS) RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 GANGS OF NEW YORK
2 SEX DRIVE
3 RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 TEARS OF THE SUN
2 GANGS OF NEW YORK
3 SEX DRIVE
4 JUST MARRIED

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03
1 (DOLBY EX) GANGS OF NEW YORK
2 SEX DRIVE
3 (DTS ES) THE CORE
4 JUST MARRIED

Cine Nepo Mall
(Angeles City) te (045) 887-0121
1 WISH MASTER
2 MESSAGE SEND
3 (DOLBY) GANGS OF NEWYORK
4 (DTS) JUST MARRIED

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

FESTIVAL CINEMA
Level 4
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
Tel. 85035-71 to 72

KANGAROO JACK
NOW PLAYING

NOW SHOWING

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 833-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173868
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED
5 CLOSED
6 CLOSED
7 CLOSED
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SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
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SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749
1 CLOSED
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12 CLOSED

SM CITY MANILA
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SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401
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SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED
5 CLOSED
6 CLOSED
7 CLOSED
8 CLOSED

SM SOUTHMALL
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1 CLOSED
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SM CITY CEBU
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SM CITY ILOILO
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SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015
1 CLOSED
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4 CLOSED
5 CLOSED
6 CLOSED

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED
5 CLOSED
6 CLOSED

SM BICUTAN
776-3055
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
859-2884
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED

THE PODIUM CINEMA
18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center Mandaluyong City
633-0976
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT IN OBSERVANCE OF THE LENTEN SEASON, THE SM CINEMAS WILL BE CLOSED ON APRIL 17 & 18 (MAUNDY THURSDAY & GOOD FRIDAY). CINEMA OPERATIONS WILL RESUME ON APRIL 19 , 2003.

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

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@ Robinsons Malls

call-a-movie: 536- 7812

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4 CLOSED
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8 CLOSED
9 CLOSED
10 CLOSED
MATINEE PRICE: P90 THX cinema · P75 Ilevel cinemas
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Ermita 536 -7809- 12
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED
5 CLOSED
6 CLOSED
7 CLOSED

Metro East - Marcos hway 682- 8193 / 8280
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED
5 CLOSED
6 CLOSED
7 CLOSED
8 CLOSED

Novaliches 935- 3229 - 30
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED
5 CLOSED
6 CLOSED
7 CLOSED
8 CLOSED

Malabon Citisquare 288-0985 / 288-2575
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED

Star Mills- Sn Fernando, Pamp. 875- 1927 961- 5318 / 5270
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED
5 CLOSED
6 CLOSED

Imus 471- 8188 / 875- 3038
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED
5 CLOSED
6 CLOSED

Sta. Rosa Laguna 049-8370907
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED
5 CLOSED

Bacolod 441- 0453 / 0459
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED
5 CLOSED
6 CLOSED

Iloilo 336- 8077 - 78
1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED
4 CLOSED
5 CLOSED
6 CLOSED

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Back with a vengeance

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Edu returns as a regular talent on a dizzying number of ABS-CBN shows

THERE was a time when **Edu Manzano** was many viewers' favorite talk show host on TV. Later, however, he pretty much dropped out of sight on the tube, and concentrated instead on his career as a movie actor.

Happily, Edu has now returned to the small screen–and thanks to ABS-CBN he's back with a vengeance. In fact, he's a regular talent on a dizzying number of shows:

Early in the morning, he's bright eyed and bushy tailed on "Magandang Umaga, Bayan." On Saturday afternoon he's one of the hosts on ABS-CBN new show biz talk show, "S2." And on Sundays, he co-hosts Channel 2's reenergized noontime show, now known as "ASAP Mania." And that's just for starters. We've also caught Edu on the other TV shows, as a livewire guest.

It's great to see Edu getting so much exposure on TV, but in some cases, quantity doesn't mean quality. On "S2" for instance, Edu's co-hosts appear to be doing more topical features. Perhaps this is because Edu doesn't feel comfortable about having to deal with show biz chismis, controversy and scandal involving his fellow TV-film stars.

We can understand and even sympathize with his reticence to go with the shallow flow, but the show should compensate in other ways, to utilize Edu's talents better, and not leave him hanging.

The same goes for Edu's participation in his other new shows, "ASAP Mania." During the show's launching telecast, he was initially used mainly as a running gag: he kept trying to talk, but his son Luis kept shunting him off to one side.

It was supposed to be funny, but it really wasn't fun to see a major TV talent like Edu being treated in so cavalier a fashion. Of course, being the professional that he is, Edu gamely went through the whole repetitive routine, but his heart clearly wasn't in it.

Edu gets better exposure on the noontime show's regular singing tilt, "Star for a Million." The talent search seeks to discover potential total performers, and is offering its grand champion a cool P1M, a contract with Star Records, inclusion in ABS-CBN's roster of stars, and regular singing stint on "ASAP Mania."

Edu is the right choice to co-emcee this talent search because he appreciates the need to keep discovering and building up new singers and all-around performers for an entertainment industry that is in constant need of reenergizing.

Finally, we hope that ABS-CBN will also give Edu a new talk or interview show soon. It's rally what he does best. Some of the network program hosts are frankly overworked and overexposed, like those veteran talents' who have several weekday interview or magazine shows to do. Why can't Edu be given some of those slots, to give those overworked hosts some breathing space, and to provide greater variety on the tube?

The movies they're making, 2

"THE HULK." The comic-book adaptation is directed by **Ang Lee**. With **Eric Bana, Nick Nolte** and **Jennifer Connell.**

"J.M. Barrie's Neverland." **Johnny Depp** plays the famous creator of "Peter Pan." With **Dustin Hoffman** and **Kate Winslet.**

"Matchstick Men." **Nicolas Cage** is cast as a con man whose operation is interrupted by the arrival of his teenage daughter.

"The Matrix Reloaded." **Keanu Reeves** resume his fight to the death against evil machines. Directed by the Wachowski brothers.

"The Runaway Jury." Can justice be brought? This **John Grisham** story says yes. With **Dustin Hoffman, Gene Hackman** and **John Cusack.**

"Bad Boys 2." **Will Smith** and **Martin Lawrence** return as undercover agents out to bust a drug lord in Miami.

"Casa de los Babys." About American women who go to South American to adopt babies. Directed by **John Sayles.**

"The Fighting Temptations." To get his inheritance, **Cuba Gooding Jr**'s character has to form a successful gospel choir.

"Le Divorce." **Glenn Close** and **Kate Hudson** in a comedy about romantic misadventures in France by **James Ivory** and **Ismail Mechant.**

"Charlie's Angel: Full Throttle." A killer is targeting people in a witness protection program. With **Drew Barrymore, Cameron Diaz,** and **Lucy Liu.**

"Open Range." A western about a corrupt lawman. Starring **Kevin Costner**, who also directs.

Holy Week gigs in Boracay

EXPECT the ultimate fun in Boracay as party promoters Big Fish with Smart Communications and Axe, present the "Easter Weekender Event" at Hey Jude in Boracay from April 17 (Maundy Thursday) to April 19 (Black Saturday).

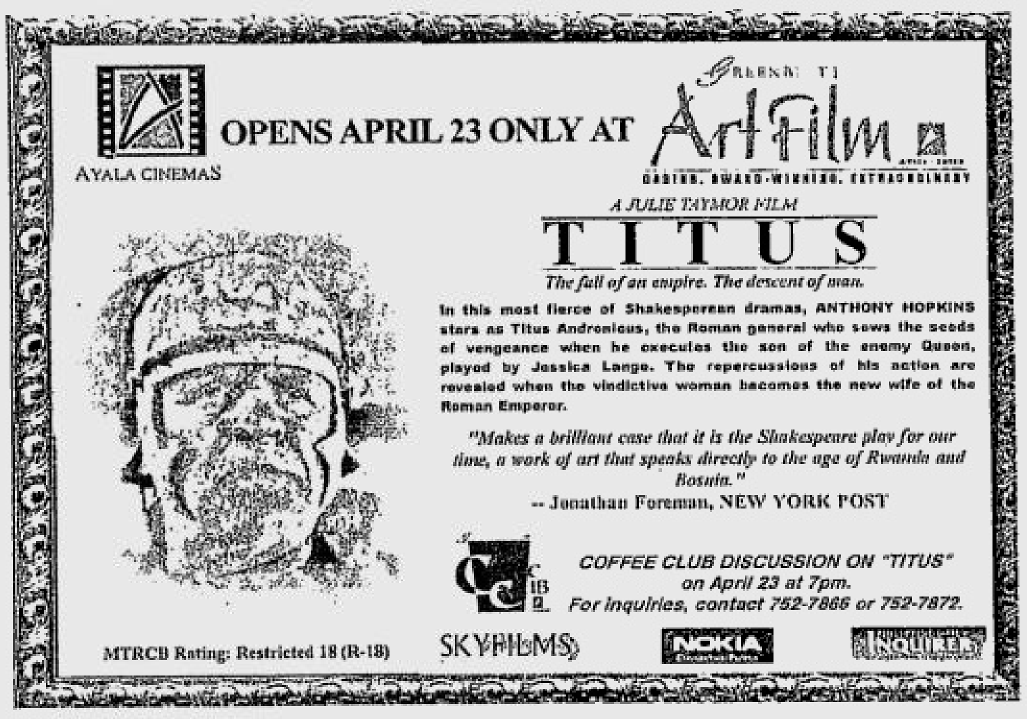
After staking claim of Boracay last year by bringing in UK superclub Slinky, Big Fish continues the dance music legacy with a roster of events for every genre, headlined by internationally known DJs.

On April 17, "Chill Out Project" DJ Anton Ramos gets everyone into the mood with "Boracay Bliss," a sunset session starting 4 p.m. that will take everyone on a sweet, soulful musical journey.

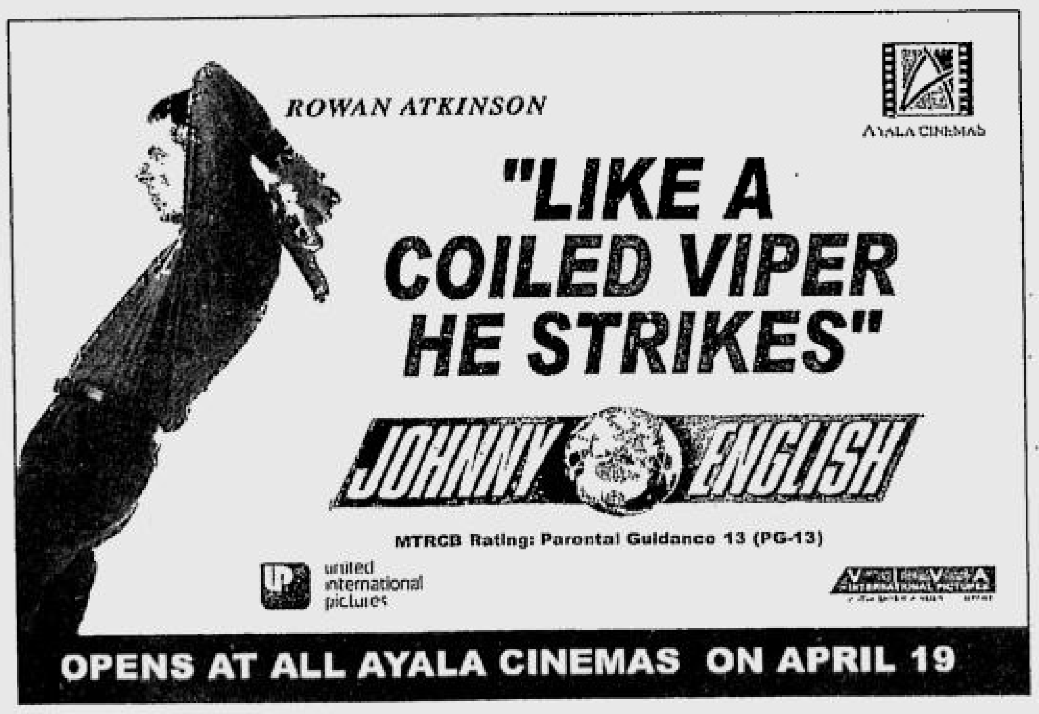
Later that evening, Singaporean DJ Brendon P, resident at club legends Zouk and Velvet in Singapore, with Big Fish resident DJ TC, will bring the house down with their brand of dance music in a party that will last until dawn.

Good Friday will see another early event as Hey Jude presents it resident DJs in "Feel Good Fridays" starting 3 p.m.

AYALA CINEMAS
presents
THE SPECIAL ADVANCE SCREENING
OF
BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
starring
Steve Martin & Queen Latifah
APRIL 21 & 22
GLORIETTA 4
GREENBELT 3
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)



AYALA CINEMAS
OPENS APRIL 23 ONLY AT ArtFilm
DARING, AWARD-WINNING, EXTRAORDINARY
A JULIE TAYMOR FILM
TITUS
The fall of an empire. The descent of man.
In this most fierce of Shakesperean dramas, ANTHONY HOPKINS stars as Titus Andronicus, the Roman general who sows the seeds of vengeance when he executes the son of the enemy Queen, played by Jessica Lange. The repercussions of his action are revealed when the vindictive woman becomes the new wife of the Roman Emperor.
"Makes a brilliant case that it is the Shakespeare play for our time, a work of art that speaks directly to the age of Rwanda and Bosnia."
-- Jonathan Foreman, NEW YORK POST
COFFEE CLUB DISCUSSION ON "TITUS" on April 23 at 7pm.
For inquiries, contact 752-7866 or 752-7872.
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R-18)
SKYFILMS
NOKIA
INQUIRER



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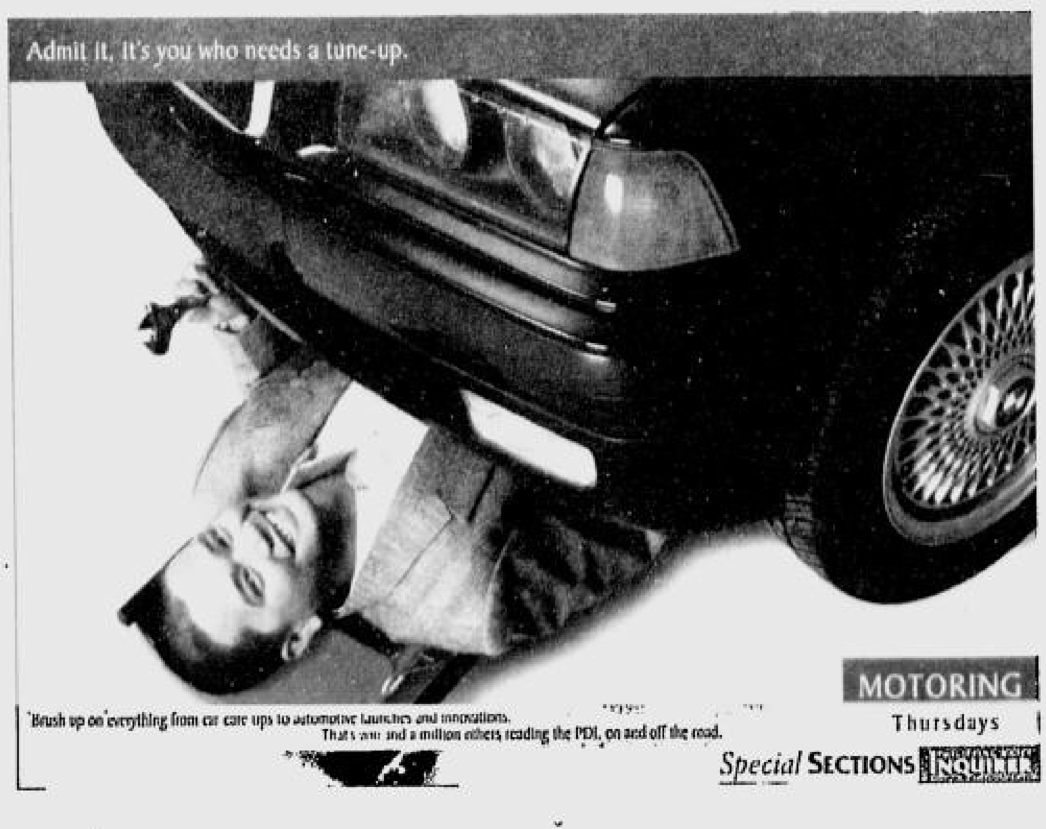

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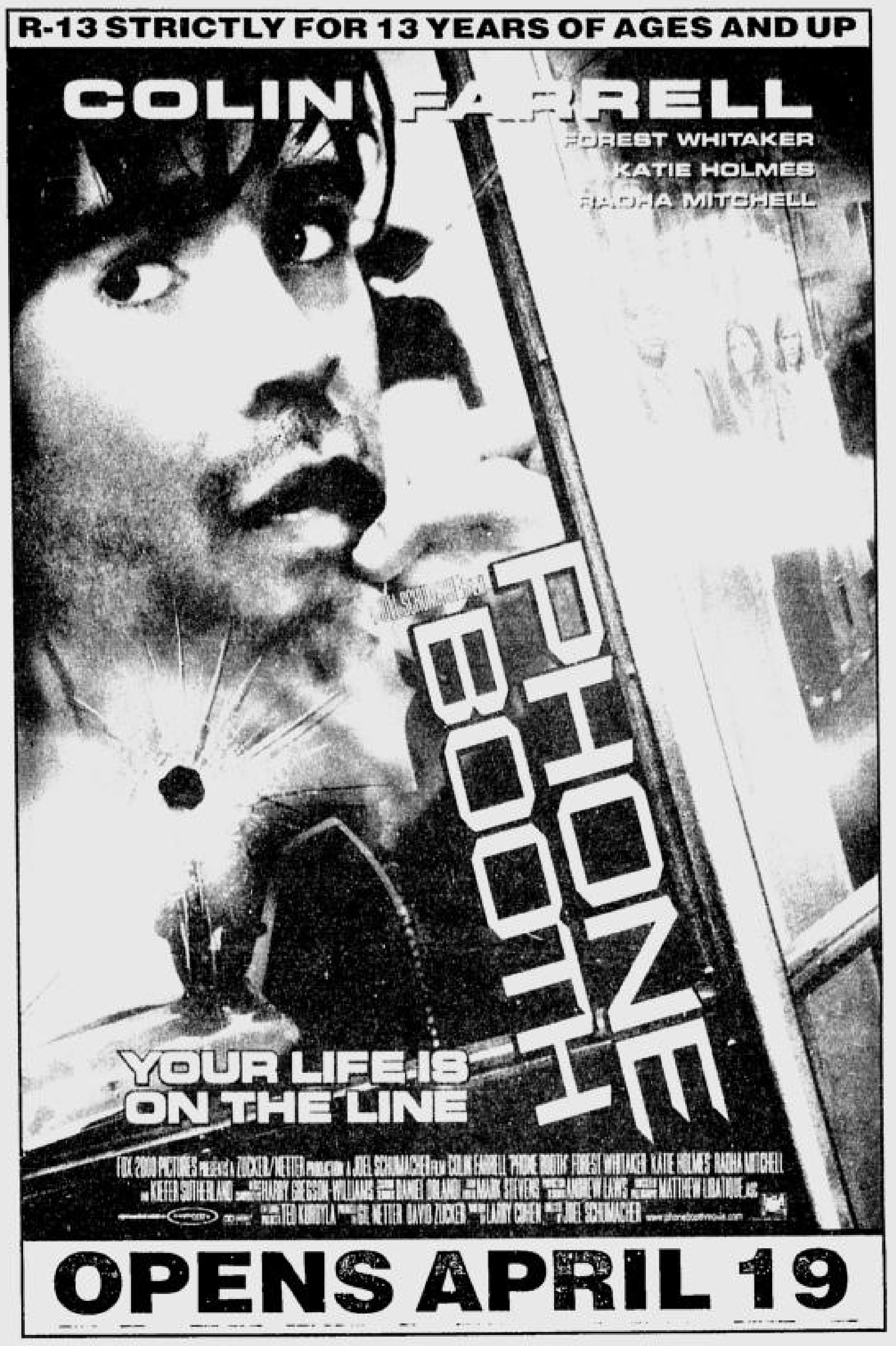

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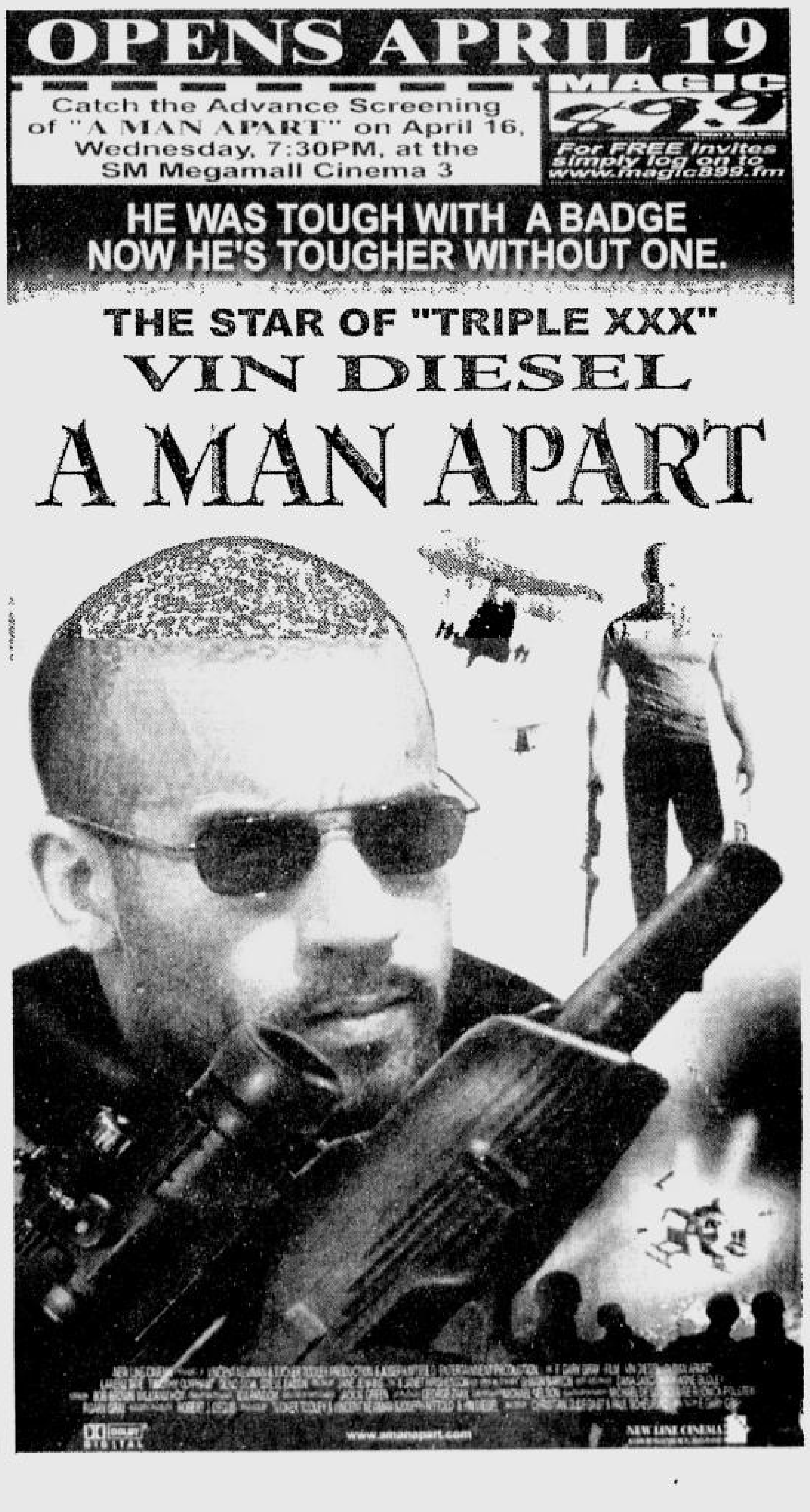

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The crosses that stars have to bear

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

IN DEFERENCE to Maundy Thursday, I thought of continuing my Holy Week forum with some stars (part one came out in my previous column). I asked them what they consider their own journey to "Calvary" and how they managed to rise above that episode.

We all have our own crosses to bear. And sometimes we feel as if fate is a double-crosser. That's when we just have to take a leap of faith.

This Holy Week let's not only tell Him where it hurts but let's also listen closely to know what pains Him. May we all thirst for His mercy long after Holy Thursday is over.

Karen Davila: "Life was so tough when I was growing up. There were times when money was tight, and my parents faced a major struggle in their marriage.

The abundant life I have now is a blessing from God. I know God restores and builds relationships. I love my family immensely. God has healed all our wounds."

Pinky Amador: "Losing the home I worked so hard for to Melody Co of Ray Burton Development Corp. is the worst nightmare of my life. I'm still suing them for justice in my case. I survived through the help of family, friends and incessant prayers. I'm still praying for justice in my coercion case against the officers of that corporation."

Gina Alajar: "I think my biggest Calvary was when my mom was stricken with breast cancer. She had chemo and I saw with my own eyes how she tried so hard to fight the illness. I had to be strong for her sake.

"I wanted to save her from the pain but I was helpless. When she passed away, it took me a long time to come to terms with it. She was with me all my life. She was always my *kakampi*. It was the unconditional love and support of my kids that helped me move on. And, of course, God was with me through it all."

Tin-Tin Bersola: "The separation of my parents when I was in high school was the most painful thing I ever experienced. But God helped me carry that cross; also lately, when there were many upheavals in my career but as always I wasn't alone. When I carried my cross, He carried me along with it."

Monsour del Rosario: "My ultimate Calvary was when I was in my early teens. I came from a broken home and I was turning out to be destructive to myself and a menace to society. My love for martial arts, **Bruce Lee**, tae kwon do and my dream to become world champion and an Olympian drove me to make history in the field I chose."

As *pour moi*, the stations of the cross in my life have had many detours. I cannot pinpoint which fall hurt the most. One can't immediately stand up after falling. We all have to kneel first before we can even attempt to get back on our feet again. It's not only because that's how our bodies are built, but more importantly, that's how we build our faith.

As I await Easter, I thank God for all those moments when I was rendered powerless and incapacitated. That's when I truly felt I mattered to Him because He sent me not just a handful but a truckload of blocks in the form of time-tested allies, new-found friends, kind strangers, supportive colleagues, rekindled family ties and, yes, a better lover to rebuild my life with.

May God also send you an avalanche of "building blocks" to give you a headstart this Easter, whatever it is you are hunting for.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or jaimealsan@yahoo.com

Meltdowns and shockers ...

From page A22

took the best director trophy for Gil Portes.

The winning director delivered a heartwarming acceptance speech on stage, with some of the child actors of "Mga Munting Tinig" beside him. "Let us all go back to creating character-driven films like 'Munting Tinig'," he said. "It is fulfilling to see how a small Filipino film like this could make people of other cultures laugh and cry."

"Mga Munting Tinig" has been invited to several film festivals abroad and will soon go to the Moscow International Film Festival.

The Famas awards show at the Teatro Arturo Enrile in Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City lasted for almost five hours Saturday night. If the Star Awards could put up a fast-paced and engaging show, why couldn't the Famas?

The Famas show gaps were agonizingly long even for hosts Roderick Paulate and Lorna Tolentino who both complained of the unbearable heat of the theater lights.

"*Naagnas na po ako dito sa entablado* (I'm melting down here on stage)," Paulate quipped.

But despite the long wait, every seat inside the Camp Aguinaldo was occupied. The venue is at least more accessible than the UP Film Theater in Diliman where most local award shows are held.

Hosts Kris Aquino and Maricel Soriano joined Paulate and Tolentino in the second half of the ceremony. Aquino apologized for being late, saying she had just come from a commercial taping.

That night, Aquino received her third best supporting actress award for Chito Roño's "Mano Po." She dedicated the award not only to the two "Js" in her life (which she did during the Star Awards show), but also to her late father Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., who she said was also a Famas nominee 51 years ago for his work on "Korea."

"My father did not win the award, so I'm sure that wherever he is now he is proud that I'm holding my own Famas trophy," said the actress-TV host.

If many people expected Aquino's victory that night, they were stunned and speechless when starlet Bovick's name was announced as winner of the best actress award for the Francis "Jun" Posadas bold flick "Tampisaw."

Minutes before the best actress award was announced by presentors Yul Servo, Maricar De Mesa and Ynes Veneracion, all cameras were focusing on the more favored nominee, Ara Mina.

Ara Mina had the am-I-going-to-win look while some people were chanting "Aleck! Aleck!"

At 18, Bovick is the youngest winner of the best actress plum from any local awards-giving body. Star for all seasons Vilma Santos was 19 when she won her first best actress trophy from the Famas for Maning Borlaza's "Dama de Noche" in 1973.

Bovick was involved in a legal battle with his father, Aurelio P. Tambis, who had asked the Quezon City Regional Trial Court to put her daughter in jail for appearing in exploitative bold movies that showed her in several stages of nudity when she was only 17. The lawsuit has been settled, according to Bovick.

The Famas Lifetime Achievement award went to actress Boots Anson-Roa who came to the awards show with her father actor, Oscar Moreno.

AND THE BIG shocker of the night, best actress Aleck Bovick.

Anson-Roa encouraged other artists to serve the industry by volunteering their services to cause-oriented groups like the Movie Workers' Welfare Foundation (Mowelfund), where she is executive director.

The family of the late Amado Cortez, led by his widow Gloria Sevilla, accepted his posthumous lifetime achievement award for his contributions to the industry since the 1960s.

The show opened with a dance number by Regine Tolentino, Angela Velez, and the Hotlegs dancers. It was pleasant to see the two rivals of the "Clash Dance" segment of "ASAP" sharing the stage again after their highly publicized cat fight. Tolentino had accused Velez of sabotaging one of her dance acts, an allegation which Velez denied.

Pops Fernandez sang a medley of the nominated songs while Sharon Cuneta, best actress nominee for Joel Lamangan's "Magkapatid," sang songs from her hit movies.

Toward the end of the show, past Famas best child supporting actor awardees Paulate and Snooky Serna sang songs about children with young stars Serena Dalrymple, Camille Prats and Shaina Magdayao.

The Flavio Macasso Memorial Award went to veteran movie writer Robustiano Lu. Marota; Dr. Jose Perez Memorial Award, movie writer Emmy Abuan; Lou Salvador Sr. Memorial Award, comedienne Metring David; and the German Moreno Youth Achievement Award, Piolo Pascual and Alessandra de Rossi.

The Famas gave out its versions of non-award honors. Aquino was picked "Woman of the Night" while Soriano was named "Face of the Night." The Celebrity Mom of the Night award went to megastar Cuneta.

MEGA MOTHER Sharon Cuneta is the night's "Celebrity Mom" awardee.

SERIOUSLY NOW, former comedienne Metring David accepts the Lou Salvador Sr. Memorial Award.

WITH HIS BOOTS (Anson-Roa) and a cane, Oscar Moreno shows why he was a matinee idol in the movies.

Divine Mercy Channel airs Holy Week specials

THE DIVINE Mercy Channel, the only nationwide Catholic TV station in Asia, has lined up programs from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday.

Today, "Stations of the Cross" will air from 1 to 3 p.m.

After the 3 o'clock prayer and chaplet to the Divine Mercy, a Holy Mass with the washing of the feet will be presided by Rev. Fr. Efren Rivera, O.P.

On Good Friday, the Seven Last Words will be shared by seven priests and laymen at 12 noon. The first day of the novena to the Divine Mercy airs at 6:30 p.m.

On Black Saturday, a Life in the Spirit Seminar will air live from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., to be followed by the second day of the novena at 6:30 p.m.

On Easter Sunday, the Baptism to the Holy Spirit will start at 10 a.m.

The Easter Sunday Mass will air at 3 p.m., followed by the final Life in the Spirit Seminar and the third day of the novena at 6:30 p.m.

Speakers in the Life in the Spirit Seminar come from various charismatic groups. Benny Nana and Rey Tan for "Introduction," Boni Escoda for "God's Love" and "Baptism in the Holy Spirit," Norma Nueva for "Salvation," Rey Tan for "New Life," Fe Buenviaje for "Receiving God's Gift," Benny Nana for "Transformation" and Ed Toledo for "Growth."

Moderator is Don de Castro and Alfred Acuin in praise and workship, with Ely Parentela as musician.

For more information, call 701-3134 to 38 or 0920-7521060.

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	SEX DRIVE
Ali 2	TEARS OF THE SUN
Ali 3	NATIONAL SECURITY
Ali 4	THE CORE
Ali 5	KANGAROO JACK
Ali 6	SOLARIS
Ali 7	THE RECRUIT
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	SEX DRIVE
Farmers 2	WILLARD
ARANETA COLISEUM	
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APR 20	PBA GAMES
APR 21 & 23	NCA 7 COCK DERBY
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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
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ODEON	THE CORE
ODEON-2	BUSINESS FOR PLEASURE/KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ROBEN	SEX DRIVE
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	BELOW EXTREMIST
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	HAPPY HOUR
CORONET B	VIRGIN PEOPLE III
QUEZON-1	VIRGIN PEOPLE
REMAR	SEX DRIVE
REMAR-2	CORU QUIRINO STORY
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C	
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CINEMA-1	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
CINEMA-2	KANGAROO JACK
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CINEMA-1	PALABAN
CINEMA-2	VIRGIN PEOPLE 3
CINEMA-3	HAPPY HOUR
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	RECRUIT
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	WISH MASTER
CINEMA-6	SEX DRIVE
CINEMA-7	PARU PARONG LIGAW
CINEMA-8	ASTERIX & OBELIX
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SOLARIS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	KANGAROO JACK
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	NATIONAL SECURITY
CINEMA-12	WILD THORNBERRY'S
CINEMA-14	THE CORE
CINEMA-15	WILLARD
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LANES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
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NATIONAL SECURITY P13 12:10,2:10,4:10, 6:10,8:10,10:10	KANGAROO JACK GP 1:25,3:35,5:45, 7:55,10:00	THE RECRUIT P13 12:40, 3:05, 5:30, 7:55, 10:20

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

Bob Hope no-show in 100th birthday tribute

LOS ANGELES—Legendary entertainer Bob Hope was a no-show for health reasons at the first of several events planned to celebrate his 100th birthday next month, but a galaxy of stars turned out to name him Hollywood's "Citizen of the Century" on Tuesday.

The ski-slope nosed comedian, famous for one liners such as "golf is my real profession—show business pays my green fees," has been in frail health, but friends said he still has the gift for innuendo-laced banter that made him famous.

"He is the biggest thing that has happened for us at Paramount. He was the apex of stars," said producer A.C. Lyles, who was an office boy at Paramount Studios when Hope began working there as a fledgling actor in 1936.

Hope's birthday is May 29, but Hollywood got the party started with Universal Studios Home Video release of "The Bob Hope 100th Birthday Tribute Collection," the NBC special "100 Years of Hope and Humor" and the unveiling of a plaque on one of the actor's four Walk of Fame stars.

Linda Hope, who attended the ceremony in her father's stead, said he sent his love and thanks for the tribute from his co-stars and admirers.

"It's such a touching thing for me to hear these words from all these people," she told the attendees.

Linda Hope said her London-born father and mother, married 69 years, planned a quiet birthday celebration at home with family.

"I think we will be watching the TV because there will be things all over the country honoring him," she said.

Praised for entertaining American troops abroad from World War II to the last Gulf war, Hope wished he could have done the same for American soldiers in Iraq, his daughter said.

"He has said, 'The doctors are keeping me down here but my heart is with them'," Linda Hope said.

Comedian Phyllis Diller and actress Connie Stevens, both members of Hope's famous USO shows, offered their congratulations and thanks for good times on the set and on the road.

"He really really loved America," Stevens said. "He should have 50 stars, a stamp and a day in his name."

"He never boasted about his resume—he's a legend and an icon," said actress Eva Marie Saint, who starred with Hope in three films, including "That Certain Feeling."

"There is so much love for him and so much appreciation," she said. "If you look at a Bob Hope movie when you are down or have the flu, it's like chicken soup."

Wise-guy comedian Dennis Miller described Hope as "a man you show up for and honor."

"He taught me something that I've always used as a stand-up comedian," Miller said.

"He had an insouciance about him that I would find fascinating, where he would tell a joke and just stand there for a second."

"Frasier" star Kelsey Grammar, one of TV's highest paid comics, expressed awe for "a guy who made me laugh a lot."

Born in London on May 29, 1903, Leslie Townes Hope emigrated to America with his parents in 1907. He made his first film appearance in 1938 in "The Big Broadcast" singing what became his signature tune, "Thanks for the Memories."

Paired with Bing Crosby and Dorothy Lamour for the famous "Road" movies, Hope became famous for his fast-paced banter.

Reuters

"APEX OF STARS." Bob Hope was named Hollywood's "Citizen of the Century."

RED-BLOODED. Onemig Bondoc rappels down the provincial capitol building in Bacolod City during the launch of Red Cross programs.

Onemig adds his young blood to Red Cross

AFTER Piolo Pascual comes Juan Miguel "Onemig" Bondoc.

When he turned 26 last January, Piolo ended his stint as Red Cross youth model.

In October 2002, the Red Cross Youth (RCY) launched the Red Cross Youth Star Volunteers Circle (RSVC), which included Onemig, John Prats and his sister Camille Prats, and L.A. Mumar. Recently, Onemig was named the new RCY image model.

The image model was chosen after the members of Star Volunteers Circle were observed for four months, with focus on their commitment to the youth activities of the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC). Although all members were involved in Red Cross functions, only Onemig participated in almost all RCY activities nationwide during those four months.

Onemig attended the launch of the "Red Cross Youth, Kaagapay sa Barangay" and the Pledge 25 programs in Bacolod City. Dressed in full emergency gear, Onemig rappelled down the four-story provincial capitol building, to the delight of the big crowd of spectators attending the youth disaster management drill in the southern city.

Last November, the spirited Onemig went to Pangasinan province to inspire the young members who organized the local chapter youth assemblies. He also joined them on a nature trek to the famous Hundred Islands in Sual town.

In December, Onemig was the special guest and inspirational speaker at the 13th National Red Cross Youth Congress in Butuan City, where he entertained the participants up to the wee hours on opening night.

Last Feb. 18, Onemig was a guest in a fund-raising concert in Maasin City, Southern Leyte.

During his time as RCY image model, Piolo took part in Red Cross activities in Rizal, Laguna, Bacolod City, Southern Leyte, Rizal, and other places. He still joins fund-raising activities of the Red Cross.

The first RCY image model was the late Rico Yan, who started the voluntary blood donation and recruitment activities in the youth sector.

As part of the Star Volunteers Circle, John Prats endorses the RCY leadership training; L.A. Mumar, the Pledge 25 program; Camille Prats, the Moral Recovery and Humanitarian

Values program; Roxanne Barcelo, the HIV/AIDS Prevention Education program; and Biboy Ramirez, the Drug Abuse Prevention Education program.

Meltdowns and shockers at the Famas

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE ALECK Bovick best actress shocker aside, last Saturday night's 51st Filipino Academy for Movie Arts and Sciences (Famas) awards show was smooth and uneventful compared to other awards shows.

During the Metro Manila Film Festival Philippines (MMFFP) last December, the cast of Star Cinema's "Dekada 70" staged what they called a "sympathy walkout" after the board of jurors failed to nominate novelist and screenplay writer Lualhati Bautista for best screenplay category, by design or by accident.

Last month, actor Leo Martinez, the director general of the Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP), expressed disappointment over the FAP's "flawed" choice of winners. "I know there is a better way (to pick the winners)," Martinez had said.

The FAP gave the best picture prize to "Lapu-Lapu." The Famas gave the same movie 11 nominations, but "Lapu-Lapu" went home empty-handed.

Instead, the Famas bestowed the highest honor to "Mga Munting Tinig," which failed to win even one trophy from the FAP. It also

MELTDOWNS/ A21

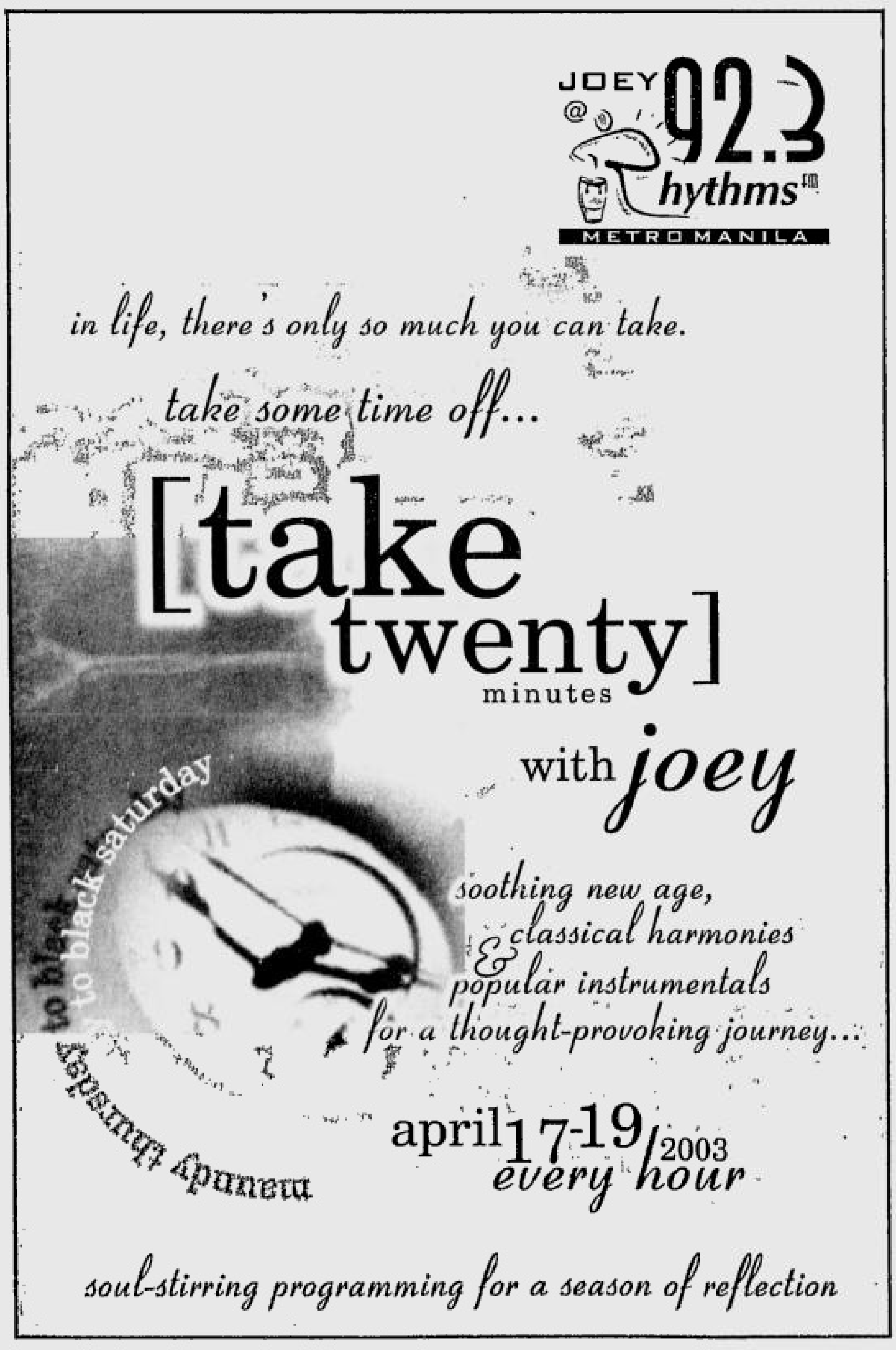
PERSISTENT 'VOICE' is heard, as best director Gil Portes, accompanied by members of the "Mga Munting Tinig" cast, exhorts other filmmakers to "go back to creating character-driven films."

PHOTOS BY AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

HOT HOSTS Lorna Tolentino and Roderick Paulate try to make light of the heat.

"SKIRTING" THE ISSUE, Rep. Imee Marcos calls for a return of the golden age of Philippine cinema.

ONE MORE award (from the Urian), and Piolo Pascual will have a best supporting grand slam record for his turn in "Dekada '70."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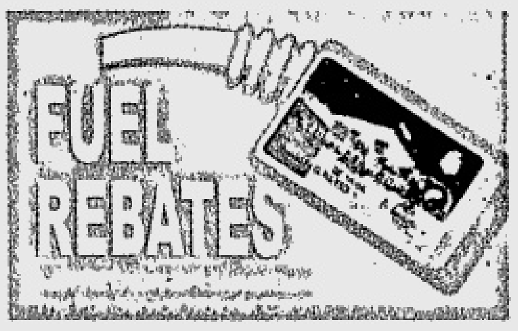

LOW INVESTMENTS, DEBT FLOW

1st quarter BOP deficit hits $502M

By Clarissa S. Batino

A SLOWDOWN in the inflow of foreign exchange into the country had pushed its balance of payment position to a deficit of $557 million in March, wiping out the $55-million surplus in the first two months and reversing the $2.157-billion surplus a year ago.

Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that the huge BOP deficit in March resulted in a $502-million deficit in the first quarter of the year. On a cumulative basis, the BOP last posted a deficit in end-2001.

BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the decline in foreign investments and in the inflow of foreign loans was attributed to the uncertainties arising from the Middle East conflict.

"We also had to contend with debt servicing and other end-of-the-quarter requirements," said Tetangco.

However, the central bank official was confident investments and borrowings would start coming in again in the coming months and that the country's external payments position would also begin to improve.

In January, the BOP surplus stood at $141 million from $660 million in end-2002. By February, the BOP position deteriorated to a deficit of $86 million.

Closely watched by investors, the BOP indicates the country's ability to settle its obligations. It is influenced by two items: the current account which reflects the movement in trade and capital and financial account that mirrors the flow of investments and borrowings.

A BOP deficit means that the amount of dollars that come out of the country is higher than the inflow as a result of trade, investment, and borrowings. A strong BOP position staves off demand for dollars and, therefore, helps stabilize the local currency.

In March, the only foreign borrowing that came in was the $195 million raised by National Power Corp. from the sale of zero coupon bonds. The BSP finalized in March a $585-million loan that will only be released this month. The amount will be used to pay maturing borrowings worth $500 million.

Considering the prevailing pressures on trade and investments, the BSP is targeting a $200-million BOP surplus this year. In 2002, the target was surplus of $149 million but advanced government borrowings boosted the BOP position during the period.

The BSP has yet to release the breakdown of the BOP account covering the period October 2002 to present pending the adjustments in official trade data last year. The National Statistics Office said it would complete the revisions by April.

Since October, the central bank had been unable to release the country's current account position as the data largely depends on the trade numbers from the NSO.

Tetangco stressed that the BOP level in March was based on the change in net international reserves and revaluation adjustments.

Statistical problems arising from the government's inability in the past to capture correct import data from the export processing zones prompted the review and revision of the trade figures.

INDICATORS

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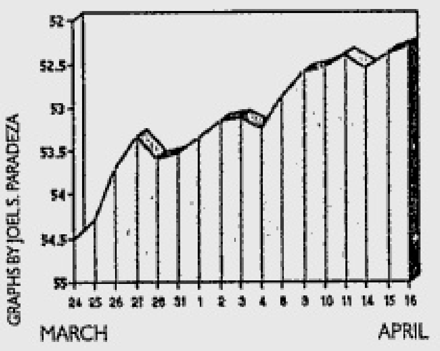

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As of 5 p.m., April 16, 2003

GOLD: $324.00-324.50

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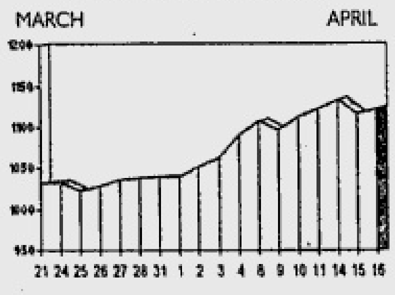
April 17, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.928419	1.000000	52.444000
Japan	Yen	0.007712	0.008307	0.435700
United Kingdom	Pound	1.460774	1.573400	82.515400
Hongkong	Dollar	0.119040	0.128218	6.724300
Switzerland	Franc	0.667879	0.719373	37.726800
Canada	Dollar	0.638571	0.687805	36.071200
Singapore	Dollar	0.521437	0.561640	29.454600
Australia	Dollar	0.560301	0.603500	31.650000
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.462846	2.652731	139.119800
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.247585	0.266674	13.985500
Brunei	Dollar	0.519977	0.560067	29.372200
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000105	0.000113	0.005900
Thailand	Baht	0.021646	0.023315	1.222700
UAE	Dirham	0.252789	0.272279	14.279400
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.077100	56.487400
Argentina	Peso	0.317952	0.342466	17.960300
Brazil	Real	0.292876	0.315457	16.543800
Denmark	Kroner	0.134637	0.145018	7.605300
India	Rupee	0.019599	0.021110	1.107100
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.244353	0.263193	13.802900
Mexico	New Peso	0.087257	0.093985	4.928900
New Zealand	Dollar	0.507832	0.546986	28.686100
Norway	Kroner	0.127057	0.136853	7.177100
Pakistan	Rupee	0.016085	0.017325	0.908600
South Africa	Rand	0.119179	0.128368	6.732100
Korea	Won	0.000759	0.000818	0.042900
Sweden	Kroner	0.109393	0.117827	6.179300
Syria	Pound	0.022106	0.023810	1.248700
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026764	0.028827	1.511800
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000582	0.000627	0.032900

STOCK MARKET

Stocks end mildly up in pre-Easter trade

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARES closed marginally higher yesterday as some players opted to build up positions in anticipation of a post-Easter rally with the Iraq war nearly finished, traders said.

Investors were also more optimistic about the domestic peace and order situation over the long weekend, they said.

Financial markets in the mostly Roman Catholic Philippines will be closed on Thursday and Friday for the Easter holidays, with normal trade to resume on Monday.

The main stock index rose 5.85 points or 0.52 percent to end at 1,122.33 points, putting its year-to-date gains at 10.2 percent.

"People feel more confident right now that they can keep their funds in despite the long weekend, especially as far as external developments are concerned," said Oliver Plana, head of sales at Asiasec Equities Inc.

"Domestically, there are no new developments that could hamper the market's rise," he said. "Right now, things seem to be neutral as far as the market is concerned." Plana said even a disappointing budget deficit for the first three months of the year was factored into stock prices.

The tax agency, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, said on Tuesday its preliminary tax collection in the first quarter was 4.4 percent short of its target.

Reuters

P73M released for infra projects

NATIONAL Power Corp. said it had disbursed P73 million for various infrastructure and livelihood projects in Benguet province, which hosts the San Roque multi-purpose development project.

Aside from an irrigation component meant for farmlands along the Agno River in Pangasinan , the $1.1-billion San Roque project also has a 700-megawatt power generation component.

The Marubeni Corp.-led project proponent—San Roque Power Corp. (SRPC)—has a Built-Operate-Transfer and power purchase agreement with Napocor.

According to Napocor's Luzon generation projects office, infrastructure funds amounting to P42.5 million were released last March to the provincial government, the town of Itogon and barangays Ampucao and Dalupirip.

The power firm said the amount had already been used up and that an additional P22 million had been earmarked for more projects in the same areas.

It said the funds were used for the construction of roads, water supply system, school buildings, barangay halls, and for the purchase of vehicles, hand-held radios and computers.

Part of the amount also went to the development of flood control and drainage systems and foot bridges.

Also, Napocor said over P7 million was used to fund livelihood projects in four barangays. The projects involved livestock raising, farming, sewing and also capacity-building training programs and technical grants for community groups.

Ronnel W. Domingo

INTEREST RATES

April 16, 2003
MART 1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 April 16, 2003 (%)	MART1 April 15, 2003 (%)
1 Month	8.0818	7.8568
3 Months	8.0318	7.9773
6 Months	8.6692	8.6135
1 Year	9.5115	9.4846
2 Years	10.6354	10.5854
3 Years	11.6154	11.5519
4 Years	12.5288	12.4250
5 Years	12.7600	12.6269
7 Years	13.2769	13.1577
10 Years	13.3654	13.2538
20 Years	13.7135	13.5058
25 Years	14.1673	14.0346

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

MANGO DE GLORIA JULIUS B. REYES-PCPO/ MALACANANG

President Macapagal receives a special Mango de Gloria ice cream from RFM president and CEO Jose Ma. Conception and managing director and CEO of Selecta Walls Inc. John Marie Concepcion during the inauguration of the largest and most modern cold-chain facility in the country, a joint venture between RFM and Integrate Global Low Temperature Operations, in Mangahan Light Industrial Park, Mangahan, Pasig City.

Prices of oil products seen to go down

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LOCAL pump prices are expected to go down soon as global oil prices continued to drop as the Iraq war nears its end, the Department of Energy said.

A DOE monitoring showed that the Dubai crude prices dropped by $8.71 from $31.18 per barrel on Feb. 25 or before the war broke out to $22.36 on April 7, a five-month low for the benchmark price.

Between April 1 and 14, the price of Dubai crude averaged at $23.34 per barrel, or lower than the March average of $27.37 per barrel.

"The sharp fall of the oil prices clearly indicates that a level of normalcy had returned in the market," Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said.

"We hope to see the downward trend of oil prices reflected in domestic prices very soon," Perez added.

He said reports that Iraq—the world's second largest oil exporter—would soon restore its oil exports had also helped prices to go down.

But in an April 8 interview, an executive of

PRICES/ B2

ICTSI revives plan to do business in Iraq

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

INTERNATIONAL Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) has dusted off its plan to explore business opportunities in Iraq following the fall of Saddam Hussein and the start of postwar rehabilitation.

A source from ICTSI said the company had long been eyeing Iraq as a key prospect for its international port expansion because of its strategic position in the Middle East. However, Iraq's state-run economy and low level of trade had forced ICTSI to put its plans in the backburner.

The ICTSI source said the US-led coalition forces' success in toppling Saddam Hussein had prompted the company to take a second look at the business opportunities in Iraq, which has already triggered a scramble among businessmen in allied countries.

The United States Agency for International Development last month awarded to the Seattle-based Stevedoring Services of America a $4.8-million, one-year contract to oversee Iraq's largest port city, Umm Qasr, and facilitate foreign aid shipments.

The recent appointment of ICTSI board director Jose Ibazeta as Philippine ambassador to Iraq is expected to give the company a boost in finding business opportunities in Iraq.

ICTSI, the country's leading port terminal operator, is one of the major players in international port management services that takes part in the privatization of ports worldwide.

In a previous interview, ICTSI chair Enrique K. Razon said: "There are only a few port operators that operate outside their home market. We're just one of five or seven that bid in ports being privatized all over the world."

Last year, ICTSI earmarked $100 million to bid for overseas port terminal operations in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. The funds came from the sale of its international arm, ICTSI International Holdings (IIHC), to the Hutchison Group of Hong Kong for $400 million last year. IIHC operated eight container terminals in six countries—Argentina, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Tanzania and Thailand.

ICTSI is currently operating the port of Suape in Brazil through its wholly owned subsidiary Tecon Suape SA. It won a bidding in February for the privatization of the Baltic Container Terminal in Gdynia, Poland.

RP lending rates among Asia's highest

FROM being the third lowest in the region last year, the country's real lending rates—computed based on average interest rate minus inflation—have become the fourth highest among 10 countries in Asia as of April 10.

A study made by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that the Philippines' real lending rate rose to 6.88 percent as of last week from only 4.5 percent in July last year and 5.6 percent in end-2002.

BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr., however, said that while real lending rate had gone up, the spread of bank lending rates over the benchmark 91-day treasury bill rate ranked the second-lowest among those in Asian countries.

Despite the increasing cost of funds, bank lending sustained its growth for the sixth straight month in February.

"The low-interest rate environment reflects the ample liquidity conditions in the wake of the BSP's monetary stance to support growth.

RP LENDING B2

Gov't urged to review income tax holiday policy

POWER producers, infrastructure builders and service providers are asking the Board of Investments to amend its income tax holiday policy to give them a longer time to enjoy a tax break that normally lasts between four and six years.

A BOI source said the board was reviewing its income tax holiday policy to determine whether power producers, infrastructure builders and service providers were eligible for at least a one-year extension in their tax breaks.

Under BOI rules, registered firms can add one more year in their income tax holiday for each requirement that they comply with such as: eligible companies should be labor intensive (with a ratio of $10,000 capital invested for every employee); they should utilize indigenous raw materials (up to 50 percent of their output should come from local sources), and they should be exporting at least $500,000 over the last three years.

This special provision allows non-pioneer firms to add up to three years to their 4-year income tax holiday while pioneer firms (those that invest in trailblazing projects or locate in least developed areas) could stretch their 6-year income tax holiday to eight years (the maximum period set by law).

Independent power producers claim that they should be eligible for at least a one-year extension if they provide power supply to export-oriented firms in the economic zones.

Service providers such as food companies and telecommunication companies are also asking clarification from the BOI whether they were eligible for tariff extension if they cater to export-oriented companies in economic zones.

Infrastructure builders claim that they should also be qualified for an extension in their income tax holiday if companies that use their projects were primarily export-oriented companies.

This policy debate is part of the BOI's ongoing efforts to improve its incentives package to keep registered firms in the country while it awaits Congress' enactment of the reforms in the Omnibus Investments Act that would beef up its fiscal perks program. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Peso still competitive, BSP says

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday the peso, despite recent gains against the US dollar, remained competitive for exporters when viewed against a trade-weighted basket of banknotes.

Exporters generally prefer a weak peso, as most of their earnings are in dollars.

A senior central bank official said using the real effective exchange rate index for March, the peso depreciated by about 4 percent from its end-2002 level of 53.3 relative to the currencies of the Philippines' major trading partners.

"The real effective exchange rate for the broad and narrow baskets of competitor currencies fell by about 2.7 percent and 3.6 percent. These developments indicate the continued improvement in the country's external price competitiveness," BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a statement.

Nominally, however, the peso improved 1.4 percent as of April 14 compared to its level in end-2002, followed by the Thai baht, which gained 0.86 percent; Indonesian rupiah, 0.68 percent; and, Taiwan dollar, 0.2 percent.

Other currencies, on the other hand, depreciated during the same period. The Singapore dollar fell 2.33 percent. The South Korean won slid 2.14 percent, while the Japanese yen dropped 0.61 percent.

The peso closed higher yesterday at 52.3 to a dollar from Tuesday's 52.375.

The local currency fell to an all-time low of 55.099 on March 12 before recovering strongly to the 52 level early last week.

"The recovery, which started around mid-March, was due in part to the reduced uncertainty in the Iraq situation, as the market priced in a quick resolution of the conflict in the Middle East," Tetangco said.

He said the peso's gain was also the result of measures meant to ensure that the local currency's volatility would not endanger the government's target of containing price increases to between 4.5 and 5.5 percent this year.

BANK tellers mark bundled peso notes. The peso closed higher yesterday at 52.3 to a dollar from Tuesday's 52.375. AFP

These measures include limiting forward contracts to no more than six months, reducing banks' accumulation of dollars to, at most, $5 million, imposing sanctions on banks found violating foreign exchange regulations, raising the liquidity reserve requirement by a point, and scrapping the scheme that pays a decreasing rate on banks' overnight deposits to the central bank.

"The BSP will continue to closely monitor developments in the foreign exchange market to ensure that speculative activities are averted and orderly market conditions are maintained," said Tetangco.

Exchange lifts Fil-Estate trading suspension

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange yesterday unfroze shares of Fil-Estate Land Inc. after the property firm managed to comply with the bourse's disclosure requirements.

On Monday, the PSE barred Fil-Estate from trading its shares for its failure to submit its annual report on time.

Fil-Estate was suspended for failing to submit 200 copies of its annual report for fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2002.

The PSE also ordered Fil-Estate to pay basic and daily fines.

Over the last six years, Fil-Estate has been blaming delays in the auditing of its balance sheets for its failure to submit its annual reports on time.

Fil-Estate struck earlier a deal with the Bases Conversion Development Authority on the restructuring of P1.1 billion in back rentals and fees.

The BCDA board agreed, in principle, with the Fil-Estate-owned Camp John Hay Development Corp. on a "mutually beneficial" agreement that would allow the government to collect the unpaid rentals and give the CJHDC more time to comply with its arrears.

26 firms seek loans to buy 'ro-ro' vessels, ports

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Communications has disclosed that 26 companies have already applied for loans with the Development Bank of the Philippines that they plan to invest in roll-on, roll-off ports and vessels.

With the recent inauguration of the "Strong Republic Nautical Highway" consisting of "ro-ro" ports and vessels, the government is encouraging shipping firms and other investors to go into the ro-ro business.

This "nautical highway" will serve as the country's ro-ro shipping lane, which is designed to move both goods and people faster between the country's islands.

Points included in the ro-ro lane are Batangas City, Calapan and Roxas in Mindoro Oriental, Iloilo City, Caticlan and Boracay in Aklan, Bacolod City, Dumaguete in Negros Oriental, and Dapitan in Zamboanga del Norte.

Seeing the advantages of the ro-ro type of shipping, President Macapagal-Arroyo included this program in her eight-point agenda.

To encourage potential investors to go into the ro-ro business, the DBP has allotted P30 billion that can be accessed as loans for the ro-ro initiative.

ABS-CBN airtime net up 31%

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. has announced that its consolidated airtime revenue hit P2.16 billion in the first quarter of the year, up 31 percent from last year.

In a statement, the company said its higher airtime revenue marked a "continuation of the strong recovery in advertising spending that began in the second half of 2002."

ABS-CBN chief financial officer Randolph Estrellado also disclosed that ABS-CBN's estimated net income for the quarter hit P107 million, up by over 2,000 percent from last year.

In a recent news briefing, ABS-CBN said it achieved a consolidated net revenue of P10.91 billion, an increase of 6 percent, despite the global slowdown in advertising spending that dominated the first half of last year.

Apart from the strong recovery in the second half, growth was also so attributed to higher revenues of ABS-CBN Global Holdings Inc., whose subscribers grew to over 148,000 worldwide, an increase of 14 percent.

ABS-CBN said, however, that it experienced pressure on its operating margins, as its expenses grew faster than revenues.

Non-cash charges, in particular, grew 44 percent, as the company began to depreciate its new broadcast complex. Its cash expenses, on the other hand, grew 16 percent.

PCD to seek quasi-bank license

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE PHILIPPINE Central Depository will seek a quasi-bank and trust license from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas in line with the Bankers Association of the Philippines' master plan to transform the depository into a custodian bank.

Under the BAP's scheme, the PCD will be one of a triad of companies that will enable the complete and "straight-through" operation of the country's first fixed-income exchange.

A separate company that will do clearing and settlement functions and the fixed-income exchange itself will be the other two companies.

BAP open market committee chair Vicente Castillo said the quasi-bank and trust license would pave the way for the PCD to offer depository, registry and custody services to market participants.

The PCD can even act as a service bureau to banks that the central bank will accredit to act as securities custodians.

At present, the PCD is largely owned by the BAP and the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The PSE and other PCD stockholders—the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines, Investment Houses Association of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines, Social Security System and Citibank NA—have signed a memorandum of agreement with the BAP to swap their shares in PCD for a stake in the holding firm that will own all three companies involved in the fixed-income exchange's operations.

After many months of laying the groundwork, the influential group of the country's commercial banks last week filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission its application to establish the country's first fixed-income exchange.

BAP officials also submitted to the SEC an application to set up a holding firm with an authorized capital of P500 million.

GMA accuses Beyond of twisting facts

By Abigail L. Ho

GMA Network Inc. has accused Beyond Cable Holdings Inc., sister company of rival network ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., of twisting data from research firm AC Nielsen to show that Metro Manila television viewers were now preferring cable TV programs over free-to-air channels.

In a statement issued yesterday, GMA Network said AC Nielsen's Peoplemeter Metro Manila report showed that the audience share of free TV channels actually increased from 57 percent in November last year to 58 percent as of last month.

The audience share of cable television channels slid to 42 percent in March from 43 percent in November last year.

These results were based on surveys conducted among both Beyond Cable (SkyCable and Home Cable) and non-Beyond Cable subscribers.

"GMA Network Inc. questioned the basis for reporting the trends in TV viewing considering that official statistics from AC Nielsen indicate a different trend from what was reported in the media," the statement said.

Beyond Cable had issued earlier a statement that claimed the exact opposite of what GMA Network was claiming now.

According to Beyond Cable, the AC Nielsen report showed that the audience share of free TV channels dropped to 56.8 percent as of March 15 from 58.4 percent in November last year.

The audience share of cable television channels, it added, inched up to 43.2 percent from 41.6 percent in the same period.

An analysis of the report by Beyond Cable showed that the decrease in the audience of free TV channels was more pronounced among non-subscribers of Beyond Cable.

GMA Network also contested this claim saying non-Beyond Cable subscribers were still more inclined to free TV channels than cable channels.

Beyond Cable also said that a survey it had conducted among its subscribers revealed that the repositioning of free TV channels in SkyCable and Home Cable had little or no adverse effect to their signals.

Broadcasters seek fees from cable TV firms

A GROUP of broadcasters has asked cable TV operators to pay for airing programs produced by local TV networks even if these come out on "free-to-air" channels.

In a position paper presented to the Philippine Cable Television Association, the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas stressed that the copyright law gave local TV networks exclusive rights over their programs.

"Under the copyright law, broadcasters have exclusive rights over the re-broadcasting of their programs. Legally, there- [illegible] compensation in return for carriage," KBP president Cerge Remonde said.

An existing National Telecommunications Commission memorandum circular, however, requires cable TV operators to carry all free-to-air channels in their lineups.

The NTC has also instructed cable TV operators to place broadcasting networks in the same channels they are in on regular TV. GMA 7, for instance, would have to be placed on channel 7 on any cable lineup. The same goes for ABS-CBN, [illegible] TV.

The KBP said its position could be reconciled with the NTC's order by giving broadcasters the option to decline carriage of certain programs.

"The option belongs to the broadcaster, whether he wants his signal to be carried under the must-carry (rule), in which case he may not be entitled to compensation, or he wants compensation in return for carriage," it said.

"In the latter case, the market value of the broadcaster's program would probably dictate [illegible] agrees to pay and how much to pay. In this case, the broadcaster becomes just like any other program provider such as CNN and HBO," it added.

PCTA president J. Manuel Dabao said earlier cable operators should be given the right to carry free TV channels without having to pay for them, as it was the broadcasting networks' duty to "give their signals to the public" under their franchise.

The NTC has said it will "revisit" its must-carry rule and come up with clear rules for both broadcasters and cable operators. *Abigail L. Ho*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, April 16, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	5,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	35.5	37	35	36.5	1,602,100
Citystate Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	26	26.5	26	26.5	102,400
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	43,400
Philippine National Bank	25	25.5	25	25.5	46,500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	10	10	10	10	23,000
Security Bank Corp.	10.75	11	10.75	11	5,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.44	1.46	408,000
First Abacus Financial	0.71	0.8	0.68	0.8	180,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3	3	2.95	2.95	14,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1360	1370	1350	1370	1,230
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	60,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1050	1060	1050	1060	6,560
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	13,400
Diversified Fin. Network	3.8	4	3.8	4	11,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.76	0.82	0.75	0.81	14,980,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	625	625	625	625	9,520
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	2,500,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	1,000,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	50,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.36	0.37	0.35	0.37	3,250,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	382.5	387.5	380	382.5	66,580
Ivantage Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	50,000
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	56,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	7.4	7.5	7.4	7.5	51,000
Manila Electric Co. B	10.75	11	10.75	11	603,900
Petron Corp.	2.06	2.18	2.06	2.18	7,779,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.99	0.95	0.99	450,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.48	1.5	1.46	1.5	570,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	379,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.55	0.59	0.55	0.59	4,260,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	2,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.74	0.75	0.74	0.75	310,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.38	1,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.75	109,900
RFM Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	540,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	57.5	57	57.5	75,600
San Miguel Corp. B	66.5	67.5	66.5	67.5	122,900
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	110,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.45	4.5	4.45	4.45	5,511,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.44	2.44	2.44	2.44	200,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	5,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.24	2.3	2.24	2.3	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.23	0.24	0.225	0.24	2,530,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	90,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.245	0.26	0.245	0.26	2,900,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.1	8.4	8.1	8.4	40,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.09	0.1	0.09	0.1	400,000
Ionics Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	340,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.6	465,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	50,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.6	0.63	4,260,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.195	0.2	3,100,000
Music Corp.	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.35	510,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	6,850,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.4	1,696,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	300,000
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	40	40	40	40	1,000
SPI Technologies Inc	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	20,500
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	600,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	20,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	1,600,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	15	15	15	15	384,500
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	5,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3	2,819,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	860,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	1,900,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.98	1	0.98	1	4,330,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.044	0.06	0.044	0.06	1,300,000
City & Land Developers	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	36,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	110,000
SM Development Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	4,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.2	2,377,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	2,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	20,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0042	0.0042	0.004	0.004	55,000,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	10,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	160,000

DISCLOSURES

STENIEL Manufacturing Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 23, 2 p.m., at the boardroom of **Steniel Cavite Packaging Corp.** in General Trias, Cavite. Stockholders as of April 16 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

WILLIAM, Gothong and Aboitiz Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 14, 3:30 p.m., at the Makati Ballroom A & B of the Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Only stockholders as of March 31 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

SAN Miguel Pure Foods Co. Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 8, 2 p.m., at Citrus at the 24th floor of JMT Building, Pasig City. Only stockholders as of March 14 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

SOUTHEAST Asia Cement Holdings Inc. has denied having any information that can explain the 50-percent increase to 6 centavos in its share price.

* * *

IPEOPLE Inc. has announced the resignation of Delfin Lazaro as a director. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

Prices of oil products...

From page B1

an oil company said he was not expecting substantial pump price reductions this month as oil firms were still recovering the costs they incurred in maintaining huge inventory as part of the country's war contingency measures.

Fernando Martinez, president of the New Petroleum Players Association of the Philippines (NPPA), made the statement amid projections by other segments of the industry that prices would go down in April.

"We are just breaking even in recovering our costs that amounted to P2 per liter," Martinez said. "If we implement further reductions, we will go back to incurring losses."

The oil executive reiterated that last month's price cuts of 40 centavos per liter for diesel was premature, although he acknowledged that international prices were on a downtrend.

"It would be more practical for new players to hold off price reductions until May," said Martinez, who is also chair of the Eastern Petroleum Corp.

Officials of Petron Corp. had said the effects of the softening crude prices and the improvement of the peso could lead to possible cuts in the prices of petroleum products of about 88 centavos per liter.

RP lending rates...

From page B1

This implies the relatively lower cost of capital for business, which should augur well for economic activity in the near term," said Tetangco Jr. in a statement.

The central bank noted that the country's real lending rate was lower compared with Indonesia's prime lending rate of 10.48 percent, India's 7.69 percent, and Hong Kong's 7.09 percent. However, it was higher than Taiwan's 5.66 percent, Malaysia's 4.98 percent, Singapore's 4.94 percent, Thailand's 4.6 percent, South Korea's 2.69 percent, and Japan's 1.85 percent.

The country's real lending rate had trended downward from a high of 12.9 percent prior to the easing of the central banks' policy rates in December 2000 to its current level.

While increases in the yields on treasuries were relatively modest, the rates increased to the 7-percent level this month. Last Monday, the 91-day treasury bill rate averaged at 7.46 percent from an all-time low of 4.299 percent a year ago.

The key BSP policy rates of 7 percent for overnight borrowing and 9.25 percent for overnight lending remained unchanged although the central bank had increased the banks' reserve requirement. *Clarissa S. Batino*

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
People, Events & Products
Editor **Aries Espinosa**
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Globe rules with killer summer events nationwide

THIS summer, Globe launches a potent line-up of varied activities that will take in the entire Philippines. These Globe killer events will stretch from north to south, in cities and in towns, in malls and in stalls, in highways and in by-ways, in discos and in sports arenas, in festivals and in fashion events, Globe will be the buzzword on everybody's lips.

Globe kicks off the summer season by holding a series of Gentxt-sponsored parties, concerts, sportsfests and a fashion show in Boracay beginning April 16 to April 20. Two of the island paradise's ultimate party places, namely Club Summerplace and Pier One, play host to a convergence of musical acts that include Reggae and Ska bands like Brownman Revival, Indio I, 63 Squad and Carlotta Ensemble, folk musician Noel Cabangon, and stage bands Silk and Next Level.

Since Boracay is the place where Filipinos and foreigners love to party and chill, the hip crowd can look forward to cool passionate tropical rhythms and ultra hip dance beats DJ-ed by top turntabulists Manolet Dario, Scrambled Edge and Mike Constantino.

On April 24 to 26 sports minded island hoppers along with celebrity participants headed by the tandem of Paolo Bediones and Miriam Quiambao can frolic and tumble on Boracay's talcum white sand in the Gentxt-sponsored Boracay Bound Beach X Games and Beach Hunt Challenge.

Trendies and trendspotters will be wowed by a parade of lithe and tanned bodies in the Gentxt and Cinderella fashion extravaganza to be held on the evening of April 25 at Pier One. Beach hunks and babes will sashay down the runaway wearing the latest beachwear creations by Cinderella.

A windfall of freebies such as henna tattoos, Gentxt stickers, Gentxt bandannas and the much desirable free Gentxt membership will rain down for those lucky enough to be in Boracay during Globe's swing in the island paradise. Discounts and other perks to some of the island resort's popular eating, clubbing, and shopping establishments will also be accorded to all Gentxters.

Globe will also make its presence felt in the island by way of strategically placed banners and streamers to be found on the Kalibo Airport, along the six municipalities on the Kalibo to Caticlan Highway, Jetty Port, Boracay Highway, Boracay Long Beach and in the areas leading to all of the Globe sponsored events.

In addition to its Boracay outing, Globe through Gentxt will also stage various sports events in different locales in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao throughout the months of April and May. Gentxt, in partnership with major sports apparel brand Adidas will mount The Streetball Competition in Robinsons San Fernando, Pampanga for the Luzon leg and in SM Cebu for the Visayas leg. The Gentxt National Beach Football Cup will also hold its regional legs in Subic, Boracay and General Santos City, which will then culminate in Boracay for the National Championships on May 3 to 4. Finally, Globe also sponsors the Manila Youth Games with 10,000 youngsters participating in a dozen sports activities at the Rizal Memorial Complex.

Meanwhile, Intensity G, Globe's regional roadshow will be holding its popular sales blitzes in major shopping malls across Luzon and the Visayas during April and May. Intensity G sales blitzes is where you can expect to find the best mobile phone products, including the new Globe Hi-Memory SIM pack, high-tech cellular phones, most affordable prepaid phone kits and other attractive deals for Globe post paid subscriptions.

In addition to these sale blitzses, Intensity G will be bringing parties and concerts to every city it makes a stopover. These events will, of course be kicked off by motorcades graced by popular celebrities.

Other Globe activities planned for the summer are the installation of booths in different malls across the Philippines where Globe Prepaid subscribers wanting to upgrade their regular Globe SIM to the new Hi-Memory SIM can do so for just P170. To enjoy the great features of Globe Prepaid's Hi-Memory SIM, such as 300 phone book memory and 65 text messages, drop by at any of the booths found in SM Mega Mall, SM City in North Edsa, Robinsons Manila, Festival Mall, SM Pampanga, Abanao Square, Fiesta Mall, SM Iloilo, Robinsons Bacolod, SM Cagayan de Oro, Gaisano-Butuan, Gaisano-Iligan, Ayala Cebu and Victoria Plaza.

The Globe connection extends even on the road this Holy Week. Should you experience car trouble or breakdown while on your way to any of the Globe fun spots and events, Globe will be providing motorists assistance by setting up motor clinics at various Petron and Nissan Stations, where one can make 3-minute emergency calls. These motorists' assistance booths are located along the South Luzon and North Luzon Expressways and in major points in Baguio City, Pozzorubio, Pangasinan, Capas, Tarlac, Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija, San Fernando, Pámpanga, Lubao, Pampanga, Tagaytay City and Baliuag, Bulacan.

By single handedly dotting the landscape with this season's biggest events, it is safe to say that Globe has got the Archipelago under its belt even during the thermal months. Wherever you are in the Philippines, no matter how far you go, you'll never be alone on the road. Globe has everything to keep you cool and always connected.

DLSU Graduate School of Business tackles charter change issue

THE DE LA Salle University Professional Schools Inc. Graduate School of Business recently held a colloquium dubbed "Charter Change: Implications on Governance" at its RCBC campus in line with its trust of taking an active role in shaping the future of the country.

The distinguished speakers were former congressman Emigdio Tanjuatco Jr., founding president of the Asian Institute for Democracy (AID); Congressman Jose Cojuangco Jr., presidential adviser on food security and jobs creation and AID treasurer; and Justice Regalado Maambong of the Court of Appeals, former delegate and commissioner to the 1971 Constitutional Convention and 1987 Constitutional Commission.

Also present were DILG Undersecretary lawyer Wencelito Andanar, social scientist and AID cultural specialist Jose Ma. Montelibano, secretary-general of the Council on Philippine Affairs Pastor Saycon, Committee Affairs Bureau and government relations and legislature specialist Annie Llamson, and former congressman Amado Bagatsing.

Dean Philip Ella Juico of the DLSU Graduate School of Business was likewise in attendance with faculty members professor Benjamin Espiritu, professor Akiro Tsusaka, professor Pia Manalastas and professor Mercy Suleik and their respective classes in various courses.

The discussion, which is scheduled for broadcast on DLSU websites, started with Maambong describing the role of the constitution and the various changes and confusion that have surrounded it since 1934.

Tanjuatco further explained how the constitution affects our everyday lives and clarified that while the constitution "should not be subject to whimsical changes, its character of semi-permanence should not be confused with being unchangeable." He also stressed that the people should be able to choose or approve changes in the constitution per issue or proposition rather than through an all-or-nothing plebiscite.

The possible amendments that will be proposed according to Tanjuatco are decisions on establishing a federal or unitary and presidential or parliamentary form of government; bicameral or unicameral legislature; foreign ownership limitations; exploitation of natural resources; and dual citizenship.

All speakers favored amendment through constituent assembly because it provides more accountability and facility in presenting to the people each of the propositions. But Cojuangco underscored the importance of looking at the message rather than the messenger, or the song instead of the singer. He also cited what he thought are defects in the present constitution.

Montelibano raised the issue of the Philippines being called the 11th most corrupt country in the world in a recent survey and appealed to those present to do their share in order to get rid the nation of this appellation, while Saycon and Bagatsing requested the attendees to be involved and take action.

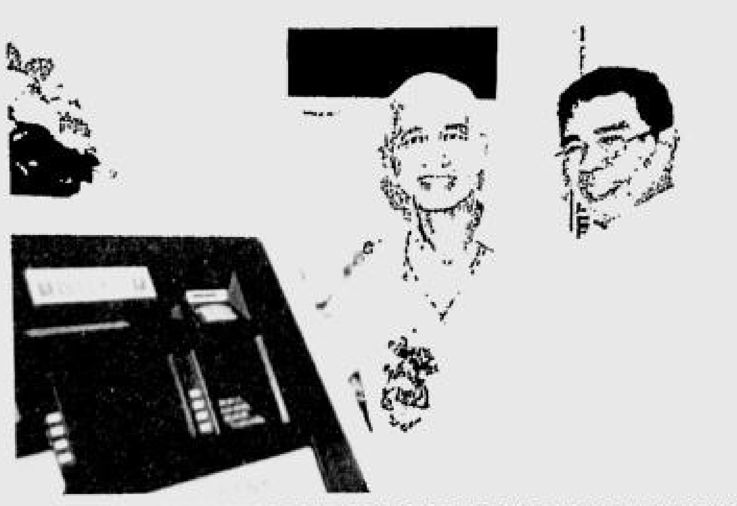
EXIT
GLOBE TELECOM

GLOBE TELECOM OFFERS FREE CALLS TO MIDDLE EAST

With war ongoing in Iraq, Globe Telecom has set up free calling centers at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Vito Cruz Manila; at the Presidential Action Center (Pace) office in Malacañang; and at the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) centers nationwide to serve families of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) who want to keep in touch with their loved ones who are in the Middle East. Photo shows President Macapagal-Arroyo checking the situation at the Globe Telecom calling center in Malacañang.

AKFI DIRECTOR AWARDS MANILA MAYOR

In a recent awarding ceremony at the Manila City Hall, Animal Kingdom Foundation Inc. (Akfi) director Charles Wartenberg, gave due recognition to Manila Mayor Lito Atienza for his invaluable support to animal welfare. Likewise, in the said meeting, Mayor Atienza announced his full support in the campaign against illegal dog meat traders and his administration's renewed campaign on the health hazards of eating dog meat. Dr. Jose Diaz, director of Manila Pound, witnessed the event.



LANDBANK INAUGURATES 1ST ATM IN CAMIGUIN

Landbank president and CEO Gary B. Teves poses with Camiguin Governor Pedro Romualdo during the inauguration of the first ever ATM facility in the province of Camiguin. This facility, which is the only ATM in Camiguin is one of the first of 300 additional ATMs to be installed by Landbank nationwide from year 2003-2004 to enhance its customer service. Located at LBP Camiguin branch, Poblacion, Mambajao, Camiguin, the ATM will now be accessible to the people of Camiguin and the foreign and local tourists who visit the island

Easter at Rockwell

CHILDREN are the stars of the day at the Power Plant Mall at the Rockwell Center this Easter. A minimum purchase of P500 from any store in the mall entitles a youngster to join several games, win lots of prizes, listen to stories, see a performance of the Playshop Kids and take part in an Easter Egg hunt. The Playshop Kids are graduates of the Trumpets Playshop who are now professional performers in their own right. Playshop kids Alexa Ortega, Sam Concepcion, Kathleen Francisco and Vincent Ching will perform. There will be an abundance of food and drinks from Nestlé chocolate, Koko Krunch and Milo and also from Jollibee, Shakey's and Orange Juice. Children and their parents may choose to come at either 10:30 a.m. or 4 p.m. to enjoy the festivities.

Nueva Viscaya HS reunion

THE NUEVA Viscaya General Comprehensive High School IV-I class of 1983 will hold a grand reunion on April 19 at the Abuan residence on Gomez Street in Bayombong, Nueva Viscaya. Event organizer Alice Abuan Coronel enjoins all her former classmates to bring their families to the affair. The reunion is the first to be held since the batch graduated in 1983. For particulars, call 0916-5605030 (Alice) or 0917-6997577 (Imee).

PLC, Petron join forces

PFIZER Loving Care (PLC), maker of "Little Lifesavers" for kids such as Caladryl, Terramycin, Bonamine Chewables, Desitin, and Combantrin, ties up with Petron Corp. for the upcoming Lenten Lakbay Alalay starting April 16 and ending on April 20. The 2003 Lenten Lakbay Alalay, a public service program, is the pioneer of motorist assistance programs. It provides various services to assure motorists of a safe and convenient travel ranging from medical assistance, cellular phone and information services, to traffic monitoring, free drinking water, and diaper change booths. In support of this endeavor, PLC will be giving away at least 100 first aid kits from Terramycin and Desitin, as well as Bonamine samples in designated Petron service centers in North Luzon expressway and Petron express center in South Luzon expressway.

ADVANTEK INC. OPENS PHILIPPINE BRANCH

Advantek Inc. the world's leading manufacturer of embossed carrier tape and other component packaging products, with headquarters in Minnesota, USA, opened its Philippine branch in the Carmelray Industry Park 2, Calamba City. Present at its inaugural ceremony were (from left) comptroller Cheche Saulog, materials manager Mina Galman, HR manager Ramon Molano, Advantek US director of engineering Eric Olson, guest of honor Peza director general lawyer Lilia de Lima, Advantek Philippines managing director Dan Salyards and wife Mary Salyards, QA manager Debbie Caliguia and production manager Francis Peralta.

ZONTIANS GEAR UP TOWARDS WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT

Zontians toasted the women of the world when they simultaneously celebrated Rose Day and the International Women's Day last March 6 at the Manila Polo Club in Forbes Park, Makati City. Led by governor Imelda 'Dandy' Gomez of Zonta International District 17, vice area 1 director Baby Perez Sison, area 5 director Lynn Sunico and area 1 director Virma Vergel de Dios, the night was a testament to the organization's mission of promoting and alleviating the status of women worldwide. The gathering, attended by some of the more prominent women in the fields of business and the private sector, also served as a fundraising event for Zonta's various programs. With the funds it will raise, Zonta hopes to enhance and expand their existing programs, respond to additional challenges, fund new international service programs, and ultimately provide more service to women worldwide. Photo shows Nellie Ilas, Lynn Sunico, Baby Sison, Marietta Goco, Dandy Gomez, Subhaporn Peters, Virma Vergel de Dios and Nonie Basilio.

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INVITATION TO BID

The Republic of the Philippines, through the Department of Education (DepEd), has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the financing of the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP). Part of the loan proceeds is intended for eligible payments in the proposed ***Renovation of the Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMC'S) Office***, covering Rooms 501, 502, 503, 504, 505 and 506 including the existing toilets at the 5th Floor, Mabini Building, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.

Bidding is open to all Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) - registered contractors or joint venture contractors with valid PCAB license.

Scope of works includes, i) rehabilitation of flooring; ii) repair/improvement of ceiling board and partitions; iii) replacement of doors and jambs, iv) repair of windows; v) repair/improvement of comfort rooms; vi) painting works; and vii) electrical works.

Bidders may obtain further information and acquire the bidding documents from:

The BAC Secretariat
Ground Floor, Mabini Building
DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue,
Pasig City

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders starting **April 21, 2003** until 5:00 p.m. of **April 30, 2003** upon submission of a Letter of Intent to the above office and upon payment of a non-refundable fee amounting to P500.00 to the DepEd cashier.

A pre-bid conference shall be conducted on **April 30, 2003** at 10:00 a.m. to be held at the Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal I Building, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.

The bids, together with their supporting documents must be submitted to the aforesaid venue on **May 14, 2003** between 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. All bids will be opened at 10:10 a.m. in the presence of the bidders or their legally authorized representatives.

(Sgd.) **JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ**
Undersecretary and Chairman,
DepEd Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Apr. 17 & 23, 2003)

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For further information, please contact Mr. Benjamin C. Formento, Human Resource Management Officer III, Personnel Section, Administrative Division, tel. no. 892-8575.

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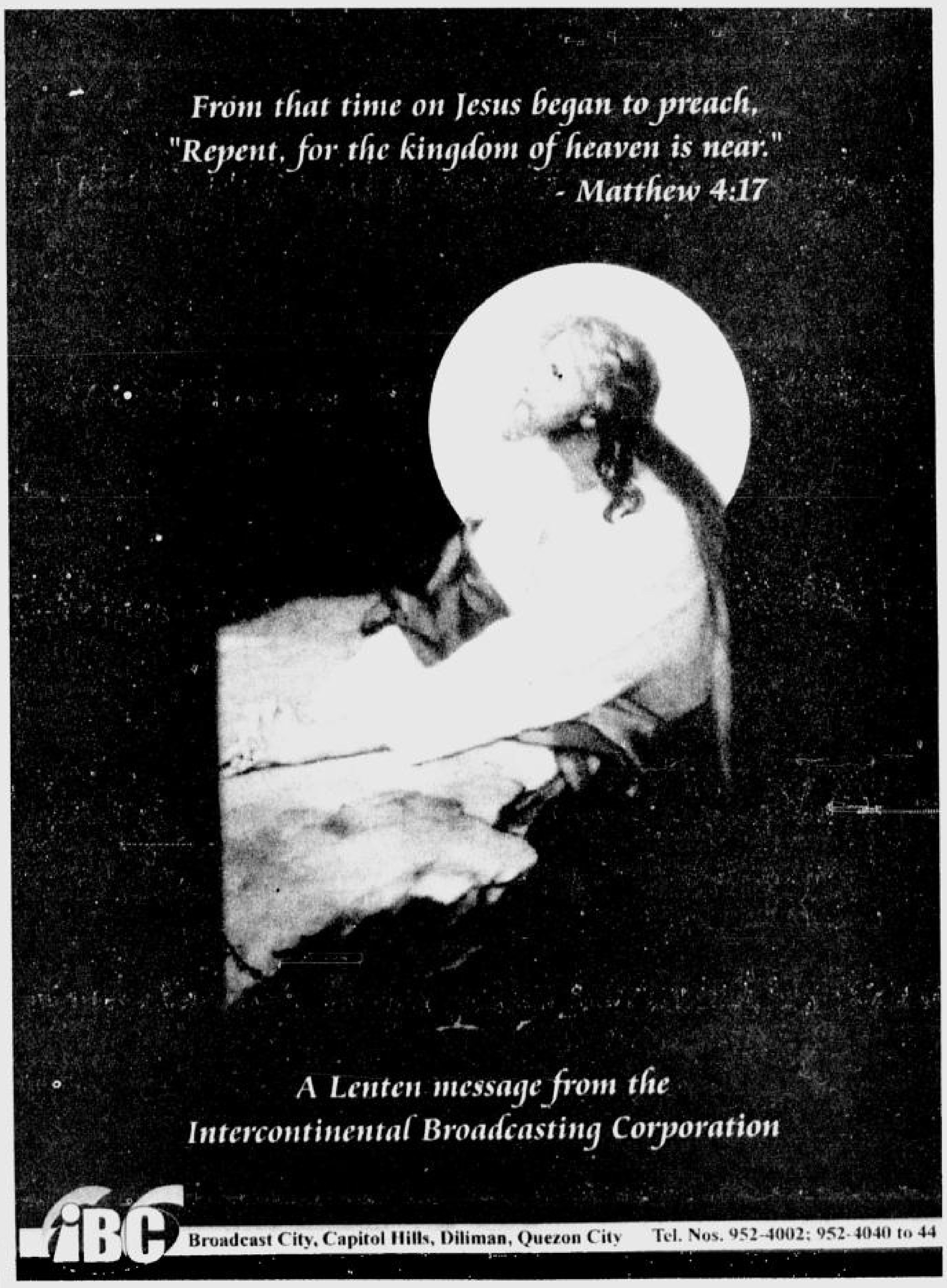
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MARAMAG RESETTLEMENT PROJECT. National Housing Authority (NHA) general manager Edgard Pamintuan (second from left) receives from Congressman Miguel Zubiri of the 3rd District of Bukidnon the P3.136 million symbolic check representing the amount drawn from the latter's local housing fund for the construction of off-site access road and cross drains, including the installation of water and power system in NHA's Maramag Resettlement Project in South Poblacion, Maramag, Bukidnon. The amount was later turned over to the local government of Maramag represented by Vice-Mayor Alicia Resus (right) for project implementation. Looking on is NHA Mindanao management officer Neofito Hernandez (left).

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AUGUSTO JAMIR GELUZ

August 3, 1954 – April 15, 2003

Peacefully joined our Lord at the age of 48

and will be deeply missed by his wife **Malou** and son **Paolo**; parents **Romeo, Sr.** (†) and **Emiliani** (†); brother and sister-in-law **Romie & Susan**; sister **Ermie**; nephews and nieces **Kristine & Joe, Don, Tanna**; grandniece **Allysa**; grandnephew **Josh**; parents-in-law **Angel & Evelyn Palacios** and all his relatives and friends.

His body lies in state at The Bahay Ugnayan Samson Funeral Homes, 145 Bayan Luma, Imus, Cavite.

Cremation will be on Sunday, April 20, 2003 at the Manila Memorial Park after the 8:30 a.m. Memorial Mass at the Philippine Independent Church, Parish of Our Lady of Pilar, Toclong II-A, Imus, Cavite.

Don't worry MAMA, when we look up to heaven, we will say...
I love you and we will always remember...

MA. ROSARIO HERNANDEZ VITUG, M.D.

October 24, 1963 - April 15, 2003

Her husband **ARNOLD**; daughters **KATY & MAYJO**; parents and parents-in-law; brothers; sisters; brothers-in-law; sisters-in-law; nephews & nieces; request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, April 20, 2003 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
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"From darkness let the light shine!"

Genesis 1:3

Ambassador MARIO IGNACIO GALMAN

of Paombong, Bulacan

Philippine Envoy to the Lao People's Democratic Republic

Peacefully joined his Creator on 11 April 2003 at the age of 55.

His bereaved wife **Adoracion de la Rama**, daughters and sons-in-law **Marianne & Gilbert Gamad** and **Julie Martha & JP Lim**; stepmother **Nana Liberty**; brothers, sisters and their spouses **Macario** (†) & **Justina**, **Maxima & Tomas**, **Anita & Miguel**, **Marciana & Reynaldo**, **Rufino & Elizabeth**, **Francisco, Jr. & Gracelyn**, **Ramona & Enrique**; his stepbrothers **Elmer** & spouse **Shineth**, **Edwin** and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains will lie in state at Chapel 4, St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Parish, Magallanes Village, Makati City from April 19 until April 21 after which he will be brought to St. James the Apostle Church in Paombong, Bulacan.

Interment will be announced later.

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Nothing that is remembered fades and no one who has touched a heart truly passes away . . .

In loving memory of the
Eighth Death Anniversary
of

Luz Puyat Martel

April 18, 1995

Holy Masses will be offered at the following Churches:

SANCTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO Forbes Park	6:15 a.m./ 6:00 p.m.	**ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH** Pasay Road, Makati City	6:00 p.m.
BACLARAN REDEMPTORIST CHURCH Parañaque	5:30 a.m.	**IMMACULATE CONCEPCION CHAPEL** Quezon City	6:00 p.m.
ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE PARISH Reposo Makati	6:30 a.m.	**ASSUMPTION PARISH** Leveriza, Manila	6:15 p.m.
STA. CRUZ CHURCH Sta. Cruz, Manila	1:00 p.m.	**HARRISON PLAZA CHAPEL** Malate, Manila	5:30 p.m.
SANCTUARIO DE SAN JOSE Greenhills, Mandaluyong	6:15 a.m.	**OUR LADY OF SORROW** F.B. Harrison, Pasay City	6:00 p.m.
SAN VICENTE DE PAUL CHURCH San Marcelino, Manila	12:00 n.n.	**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH** Quiapo, Manila	6:00 a.m.
STA. MARIA GORETTI PARISH U.N. Avenue, Manila	6:00 p.m.	**MANILA CATHEDRAL** Intramuros, Manila	7:30 a.m.
OUR LADY OF EDSA SHRINE Ortigas, Pasig City	7:00 p.m.	**ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGUORI PARISH** Humabon Place, Makati City	6:15 p.m.

Her family kindly requests all readers to remember her in their prayers.

Josefa Punzalan Goco

of Taal, Batangas

Peacefully died in the Grace of our Lord on April 15, 2003 at the age of 98, joining her beloved husband ***Jose*** *(†).*

Her bereaved family, children **Violeta** and **Nonoy Zagala**, **Rene** and **Inday Mapa**, **Lito** and **Dely Bustos**, **Johnny** and **Cely de Leon**, **Rading** and **Citas Armesto**, **Mike** and **Linda de Veyra**, brother **Cireneo Punzalan** and sister-in-law **Modesta Banaag**, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her cremated remains will lie in state at the Christ the King Parish Church, Green Meadows, Quezon City starting Holy Thursday, April 17, 2003. Funeral Mass and memorial service will be held on Tuesday, April 22, 2003, 9:00 a.m. at the Christ the King Parish Church.

"Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love Him."

I Corinthians 2:9

In Remembrance of the
1st Death Anniversary of

Josefina T. Tan

August 10, 1930 – April 18, 2002

To Mama

When God sent forth a tiny child to learn the ways of earth,
a mother's love is waiting here we call this wonder, birth.
When God calls home a tired soul and stills a laboring breath our Father's love
is waiting there, this too is birth not death.

Mama, you are sadly missed, always remembered, forever loved.

Elvis, Nini & Eugene, Gigi & Rob, & JULIAN

People, Events & Products
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Mirant launches Carbon Sink program

MIRANT Philippines is undertaking a landmark environmental program that will reforest 150 hectares of mangrove and 150 hectares of upland forests as well as develop an eco-destination in Quezon province.

The program, dubbed "Carbon Sink, will be undertaken in the municipalities of Pagbilao-where Mirant operates a 735-Mw power plant-and neighboring Padre Burgos.

A carbon sink is called such as forest lands, whether mangrove or upland, absorb and store carbon dioxide which, if left in the air, destroy the ozone layer and effect climate change. A carbon sink renders the compound harmless to the environment. It is a cost-effective way of countering the effects of global warming.

Mirant's program is the largest-ever private sector initiative to preserve and protect the country's mangrove forests. The mangroves of Pagbilao and Padre Burgos are the second most bio-diverse in the world, hosting 47 different mangrove species.

Mangroves are classified as trees in and around coastal environs. They are a critical spawning ground of marine life and help maintain a balanced ecosystem.

Mirant's Carbon Sink project, being undertaken in cooperation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, also includes the establishment of an eco-destination in the midst of an experimental mangrove forest. It will include bunkhouses, learning centers, and a kilometer long boardwalk from where the mangroves may be viewed more extensively. The eco-destination is also expected to draw tourists in order to provide livelihood and income opportunities for locals.

Mirant Philippines Corp., a wholly owned subsidiary of Atlanta-based Mirant Corp., is the largest private producer of electricity in the country, owning more than 2,000 Mw of installed generating capacity nationwide. Mirant also owns a stake in the natural gas-fired 1,200 Mw Ilijan Power Plant.

ALLERGY TESTING EQUIPMENT INSTALLED

Mt. Gilead Medical and Diagnostics Services Inc. in Las Piñas City recently installed Pharmacia UniCAP 100E, a state-of-the-art equipment for testing allergy, asthma and autoimmune diseases. The Pharmacia UniCAP 100E is an automated system that diagnoses over 400 allergens using only a blood sample. It is exclusively distributed by Trianon Diagnostics. Shown, standing from left, are Ruth Alorno, assistant chief medtech, Judith Bernales, diagnostic head, Dodie Almonte, service engineer for UniCAP 100E, Laarni Sabado-Almonte, product specialist, Vilma Macabenta, product specialist, and Carolyn Galvez, secretary. Seated are Salvador Castillo, head of Trianon Diagnostics and Marlene Tan, president and general manager of Mt. Gilead Medical and Diagnostics Services Inc.

PANGASINAN ROAD

The 19.53-km Malasiqui-Villasis Road Project in Pangasinan was formally opened to vehicular traffic with the inaugural drive-through by public works and highways Secretary Bayani Fernando and House Speaker Jose C. de Venecia together with Malasiqui Mayor Alfonso Soriano, Pangasinan 5th District Rep. Mark Cojuangco, Pangasinan Governor Victor Agbayani and DPWH Chief of Staff Martin Ongpin. The concreting of this road, the shortest link between Eastern and Central Pangasinan, will hasten mobility and facilitate the improvement of the socio-economic living of the populace.

MPF SPONSORS ACTIVITIES

The Mahaveer Philippine Foundation (MPF) and the Philippine Orthopedic Center (POC) recently sponsored several activities for physically challenged individuals in observance of the International Day for Disabled Persons. Activities included a lecture on the privileges and human rights of the disabled and vocational alternatives for the disabled lower limb amputees. Shown are some of the recipients of the Jaipur Foot which were given out by MPF and POC. MPF, composed of civic-minded Filipinos and Indian expatriates, seeks to make a qualitative difference in the lives of Filipino amputees from the low-income sector by providing them with artificial limbs for free.

ABB-FUJI-HAYA ELECTRIC AGREEMENT

Asea Brown Boveri (ABB) Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. and Fuji-Haya Electric Corp. inked a frame agreement Feb. 1 for medium voltage circuit breakers. The agreement allows ABB, world leader in the field of medium voltage apparatus and systems, to supply and support Fuji-Haya Electric Corp., the country's leading manufacturer of medium voltage electrical switchboards, with vacuum and SF6 circuit breakers rated up to 36,000 volts. This landmark agreement bolsters Fuji-Haya's mission of providing world-class technology to its customers in the light to heavy industries. Signing the contract are Yu Hi-Kian, managing director of Fuji-Haya Electric, and Stefan Ranstrand, vice president, head of business area medium voltage, power technologies division, Malaysia. Witnessing the contract signing are (from left) Rey Villarubin, VP-Automation Technology of ABB Inc. Philippines, Rodrigo Gutierrez, group head for commercial sales of Fuji-Haya, and Victor Lee, product marketing manager, secondary distribution- SEA, ABB Malaysia.

A nicotine-free aid to stop smoking

WHY IS it most smokers who try to quit fail?

Despite the many good reasons to stop smoking-environmental and social concerns, one's personal economy-the decision to quit is usually rooted in health considerations. Cardiologists warn that smoking causes coronary heart disease, the number one killer in the Philippines today. Smoking causes asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema, and has been associated with cancers of the lung, mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, cervix, kidney, ureter and bladder.

With enough sensible reasons to do so, what is it about a cigarette that makes it unbearable for the habitual smoker to live without?

Out of the more than 5,600 chemicals found in the smoke of cigarettes, nicotine is the primary component of tobacco that acts on the brain to produce a significant behavioral effect-nothing less than addiction. What it does is to selectively increase dopamine transmission in the brain regions that control pleasure and motivation. This property of nicotine is similar to that of addictive drugs such as cocaine and heroin.

Each cigarette contains about 10 mg or more of nicotine, which is 200 mg per pack multiplied by the number of packs consumed per day, the number of days in a year, and the number of years of smoking. The chronic exposure to nicotine results to addiction. How intense can this addiction be? If you put people in a position where it's hard to get cigarettes, they will go to great lengths to obtain them. Historians reveal records that indicate starving people in concentration camps traded their food for cigarettes during World War II.

More than 90 percent of those smokers who try to quit without seeking treatment fail. Symptoms of withdrawal such as irritability, cravings, cognitive and attention deficits, sleep disturbances and increased appetite can quickly drive people back to tobacco use. To relieve withdrawal symptoms, nicotine replacement therapies, such as the use of nicotine gum and patch, had been introduced in the early 1980s. They produced less severe physiological alterations and generally provided users with lower overall nicotine levels than they received with tobacco.

However, aside from containing nicotine, the success rate of these treatments were not very high and they also had their own unpleasant side effects-headaches and dizziness, blurred vision, vivid dreams, upset stomach, diarrhea and a mild itching and burning of the skin from the nicotine patch.

With today's progressive research and development, a product has finally been developed to affectively aid smokers break the habit completely, in fact, one that is all-natural and 100-percent nicotine-free. Naturstopp-Aid to Stop Smoking is a food supplement containing natural plant oils that breaks the addiction to smoking by eliminating the desire for cigarettes.

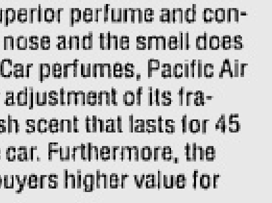
Naturstopp works in three ways: immediately after taking it, your sense of taste will perceive cigarette smoke as something unfamiliar, and react to it with distaste. Next, your body will soon associate smoking with this unpleasant taste and totally reject cigarettes. Your craving for nicotine will then cease and your body will detoxify. Finally, your metabolism will be stimulated, which counters the tendency to gain weight.

Because it extinguishes your craving for cigarettes, even smokers who are not highly motivated to quit will find Naturstopp effective. And because it is nicotine-free, it provides authentic and long-term detoxification from the harmful and addictive properties of nicotine.

Naturstopp-Aid to Stop Smoking is produced and manufactured solely in Scandinavia, and has been tested and accepted by one of the strictest medicine control authorities in the world. It is distributed in the Philippines by Citipharma Natural Health and is available at leading drugstores. For inquiries, call 898-0346.

ProductFILES

Outdoor freshness in your car



MBI PUR Car-the perfume for your car, has a new and exciting addition to its line of car perfumes. The newest fragrance, called Pacific Air, brings out the exhilarating freshness of nature with the scent of pine, herbs and flowers. Developed with sophistication and innovation in mind, Ambi Pur Pacific Air features a high-quality scent made from real perfume, which is packaged in a stylish and ingenious container that perfectly matches any car's interior.

Ambi Pur Car's Pacific Air has the right perfume impact and character that is specially made for discerning car owners who wish to give their cars an air of class and character. Despite its superior perfume and constant fragrance intensity, it does not irritate the nose and the smell does not stick to your clothes. Just like all Ambi Pur Car perfumes, Pacific Air comes with an adjuster that allows for the easy adjustment of its fragrance strength. Each fragrance has a nice, fresh scent that lasts for 45 days and is noticeable as soon as you enter the car. Furthermore, the containers are refillable, which give Ambi Pur buyers higher value for their money.

APTECH LAUNCHES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

As part of its 1st anniversary, Aptech Manila Center launches a scholarship program for fresh high school graduates who have strong aptitude towards IT (information technology). The qualifying examinations are open to all members of graduating class 2003 of both public and private schools. Candidates will be screened through a battery of tests and the subsidy that will be received by the qualified applicants will be based on his or her scores on the examinations. Edwin Alibuyog is the center's general manager. Aptech has been in existence for 17 years and has 2,449 training centers in 52 countries. The institution is popular for its hybrid method of instruction. Aptech has also forged alliances with leading industry players Microsoft, Sun Microsystems, IBM, Lotus, Adobe and most recently, Auto Desk Singapore. The qualifying exams for the program are ongoing. For details, call 736-2134 to 35. Shown are Aptech instructors giving pointers to examinees.

Clips

Edsa Shangri-La's cuisine

EDSA Shangri-La's Paparazzi takes diners on a Tour of Trentino from April 21 to 27. Trentino is the most northern region in Italy. This mountainous area borders Lombardy, Venetia, Austria, and Switzerland, thus the German influence in Trentino cuisine. Italian resident chef Giuliano Ungaro prepares Trentino specialties such as white asparagus with quail eggs, Val Pisteria fried spinach ravioli, Alto Adige gnocchi, cinnamon veal tenderloin and monkfish, and dry salted cod fish Trentino style. For reservations, call 634-7373 or 633-8888 locals 2738 or 2739.

Blowout at New World

NEW WORLD Renaissance Hotel invites families to celebrate Easter Sunday on April 20 at the deluxe property as it offers a choice of delicious buffet lunches and fun-filled activities. At Emperor Court, the hotel's premiere Chinese restaurant, partake of its overwhelming lunch buffet that includes a selection of dimsum, Peking Duck, suckling pig, and an assortment of well-loved dishes at P890+. The bustling Coffee Shop features a midday buffet with an impressive lineup of mouthwatering international and Asian fare, also at P890+. The creative continental restaurant Bocarinos offers an elegant Easter lunch buffet at P1,200++. Lively jazz music provides the perfect accompaniment to the sumptuous meal. For more information and reservations, call the New World Renaissance Hotel at 811-6888.

Easter goodies for kids

LOOT bags filled with goodies are in store for children who visit TGIFriday's, Italianni's and Outback Restaurants this Easter Sunday. Friday's delivers good food and fun at its branches in Glorietta, Robinsons Place Manila, Hotel Rembrandt in Quezon City, Alabang Town Center and The Brickroad of Sta. Lucia East anytime of the year. Kids who drop by Italianni's, meanwhile, will have the chance to pick an Easter Egg containing surprise treats. The restaurant, which has branches at Greenbelt 2, Glorietta IV, Alabang Town Center and SM City Bicutan, has an extensive selection of Italian-American specialties. Outback Restaurant is a great Easter destination for lovers of pork chops, chicken, fish and shrimp served in an "Aussie" atmosphere. Its branches are located at Glorietta IV, Libis in Quezon City and the Alabang Town Center.

CLCI's 'Effective Teens' workshop

THE CENTER for Leadership and Change Inc. (CLCI), the authorized distributor of Franklin Covey products and services in the Philippines, provider of the "7 Habits of Highly Effective People", "What Matters Most" and the "4 Roles of Leadership" programs is proud to launch for the first time the "Introduction to 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens" Workshop.

This two-day interactive session is based on the best-selling book of Sean Covey (son of Dr. Stephen R. Covey) and is scheduled on May 23 and 24.

Give your child an opportunity to learn the principles of effective teens, ranging from the proper management of their time, to dealing with the many changes in their lives, and even getting along better with their siblings.

Interested parties can call CLCI at 426-6489 to 91 for more details.

Anticipated price increase spurs auto sales growth anew

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE AUTO industry grew 14 percent in March compared to February figures. Its year-to-date sales have already increased by 37 percent. This unusual growth has been credited to the market anticipation of price increases.

Commercial vehicles posted a 57-percent increase, while passenger cars declined by 7 percent.

The Truck Manufacturers Association reported that as of March, commercial vehicle sales continued to dominate the market by comprising 79 percent of the total industry sales.

TMA president Elizabeth Lee stressed that the growth of the industry has been "primarily due to market anticipation of significant price increases of commercial vehicles due to the implementation of the value-based excise tax scheme."

As expected, Asian utility vehicles (such as Toyota's Revo, Mitsubishi's Adventure and Isuzu's Crosswind) are credited with the biggest sales volume and growth with 5,091 units sold in March. Their total year-to-date sales have reached 12,602 units, including a 95-percent growth.

Honda topped the AUV category in March with a 35-percent market share (year-to-date: 31 percent market share) dislodging Toyota from the category leadership. Toyota now trails with a 27-percent market share, even placing just third in March with a 21-percent market share.

Sales of light commercial vehicles (vans, pickups, compact wagons) in March grew by 17 percent compared to the previous month.

Mitsubishi topped the LCV category with a 21-percent market share (year to date: 18 percent). Not to be ignored is Universal Motors Corp., which registered a 19-percent market share, placing second for the month of March.

Light trucks (big SUVs like Expedition and big vans like Chateau Wagon) produced a 9-percent improvement. It even grew 20 percent in year-to-date sales.

The light truck category has been topped by Isuzu for two consecutive months, with a 33-percent market share (35-percent market share for year-to-date sales performance).

Ford remains second with a 29-percent market share for March and 33 percent market share for year-to-date sales.

For trucks and buses, Pilipinas Hino tops sales for March with a 43-percent market share. Columbian Motors placed second with a 25-percent market share. MAN Trucks continues to be the top player for the year-to-date sales with a 26-percent market share, followed by Isuzu and Columbian Motors with 24-percent market shares.

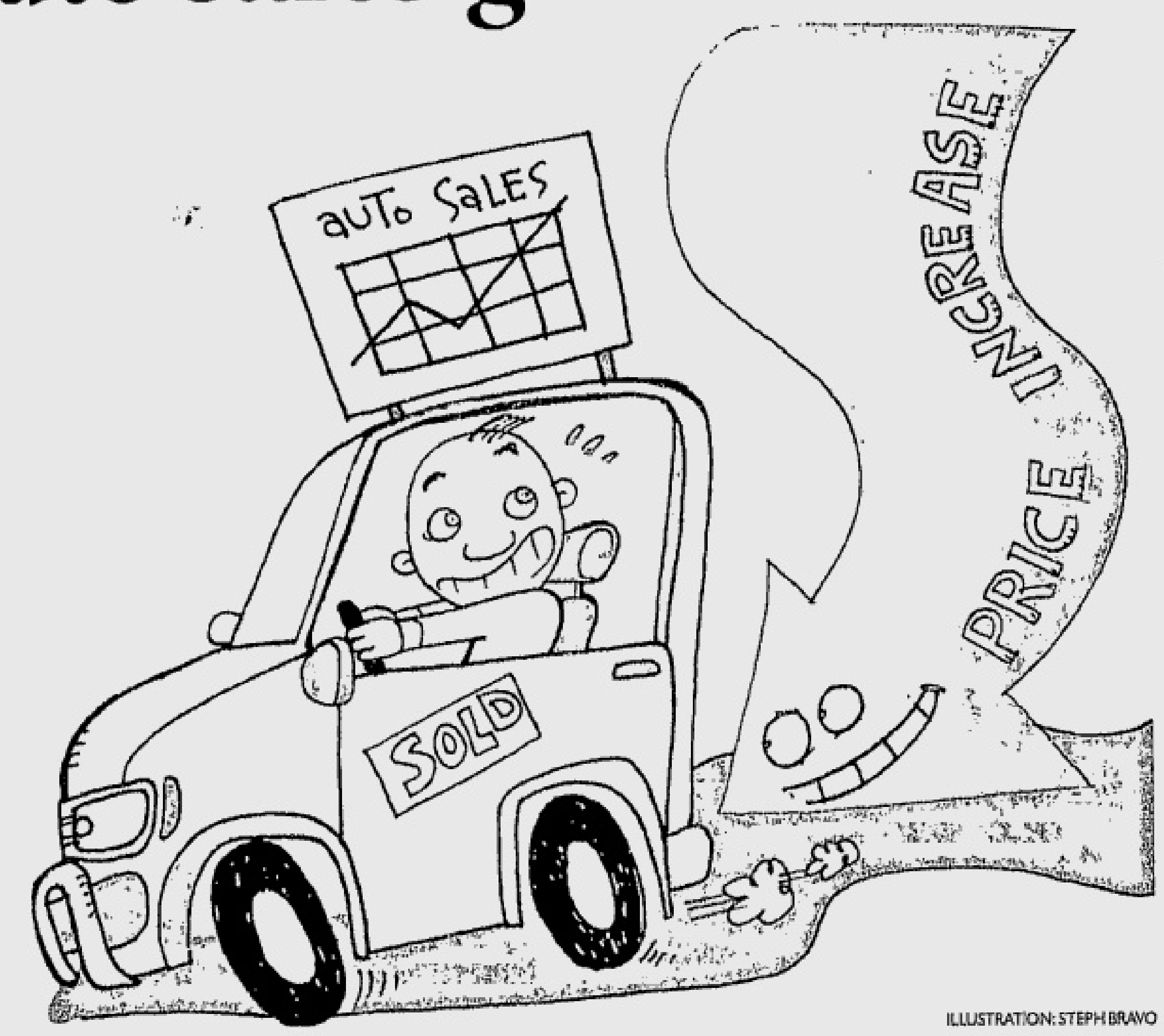


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Helpful hints for Holy Week trips

HERE are some tips for motorists on the road this Holy Week to keep their vehicle "cool":

- For those going to the province, or making a long trip

—Make sure your vehicle is in tip-top condition.

—Check the tire pressure, fan belts, engine hoses and fluid levels before the trip.

—Make sure the spare tire is inflated, and emergency tools are in the trunk.

Most likely, the traffic along the roads can go on for hours, so an effective coolant can only guarantee protection for your car's cooling system.

Don't use ordinary tap water as "coolant" for your car. For many years, water was mainly used for vehicles' cooling systems because they offered good heat transfer, was readily available and inexpensive. The problem is, water has a boiling point of 100°C, and when this temperature is exceeded, overheating occurs in the vehicle.

Prestone Longlife Coolant Concentrate offers superior performance. It gives excellent overheating protection, all around corrosion protection, compatible with rubber parts and nonfoaming.

- For those motorists with a consistent overheating problem, they should determine in what instance is the car overheating.

—Check first if the engine is in proper tune.

If yes, and it still overheats, check obstructions to the radiator. Nothing like a giant plastic bag covering the radiator can decrease airflow.

—Check also for leaves, cardboard, anything that might be blocking airflow.

—Check the condition of the radiator. Are the fins straight or are they smashed closed? Straighten all fins. Depending on the age and visual condition of the radiator, consider either replacing it or having it rebuilt.

- If you suspect radiator damage, don't hesitate to take it to a specialty shop and have it pressure tested.

—Check the hose condition to make sure your hoses are not collapsing under operating temperatures.

—Check your thermostat. Unless you're really sure, just replace the thing which can be cheap enough.

—Check the radiator cap. When in doubt, replace it. Operating the system "under pressure" is what raises the boiling temperature within your system. If you're losing pressure it will boil at a much lower temperature.

On a cool engine, remove the radiator cap and watch for coolant circulation as your car warms up. Lack of circulation would indicate a bad water pump.

Check for any leaks and make sure there aren't any.

For more than 70 years, the Prestone name has guaranteed customers the highest quality products all over the world. The name already encompasses a full line of high-performance coolants, brake fluids and car care products.

'What would Jesus drive?'

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

THE QUESTION may sound sacrilegious, especially during Holy Week, but it was first posed by reverend pastors. "What Would Jesus Drive?" is an interfaith campaign organized by religious groups in the United States that oppose sport utility vehicles (SUVs) for their poor fuel economy.

Last November, campaign leaders met with auto manufacturers in Detroit and said they would urge congregations not to buy SUVs unless they are made more fuel-efficient. "The Bible says human beings are placed by God to be stewards over the earth," the leader of Evangelicals for Social Action said. "We are not doing that by driving gas-guzzling SUVs."

Aside from poor gas mileage, SUVs are assailed for emitting twice as many smog-forming pollutants as the average car, their tendency to roll over and the danger they pose to other cars on the road. In 2001, SUV rollover accidents caused 8,400 deaths in the United States. At the same time, statistics of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that in collisions involving SUVs and passenger cars, over 80 percent of the fatalities are in the passenger cars.

Most profitable product

A growing wave of anti-SUV sentiment in the United States prompted the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, the main lobbying group of 13 car and truck manufacturers who account for more than 90 percent of US vehicle sales, to defend their most profitable product. SUVs, together with pickup trucks and minivans, make up more than half of total motor vehicle sales in the United States today and one out of every four new vehicles sold is an SUV. Manufacturers earn a gross profit of more than $10,000 on some models.

The Alliance came up with a study claiming to find that SUVs "are increasingly popular because of their safety during hazardous weather conditions and for their overall versatility." The study rattled off the following statistics: 79 percent of SUV owners reported using their SUVs in harsh weather conditions where vehicle control may be difficult; 24 percent said they "feel very safe" in an SUV; 47 percent of female SUV owners reported "sometimes or frequently" using their SUV to bring children to school or a daycare center.

The latter statistic, about mothers often driving their kids to school in an SUV, would have been the perfect squelch to NHTSA chief Dr. Jeffrey Runge, who outraged auto executives when he said at an industry conference last January that he would not allow his children to drive SUVs that performed poorly in rollover tests. Runge said that the propensity of SUVs to roll over and the dangers they pose to passenger cars were among his top priorities at the NHTSA.

Unprecedented move

Criticizing Runge, General Motors claimed that the NHTSA's own data showed that SUVs were "among the safest vehicles on the road and have contributed to the dramatic decline in the nation's fatality rate." GM contended that the majority of rollover deaths occurred because people did not wear seat belts. However, the Center for Auto Safety, a consumer advocacy group, retorted that GM pulled together disparate statistics, sliced and diced them to make an erroneous case for SUVs.

The manufacturers finally came around last February and, in an unprecedented move, wrote a letter to Runge saying they would work together to develop voluntary standards to make SUVs and pickups less dangerous and to make cars safer when hit by bigger vehicles. After all, Runge had repeatedly said that rather than imposing new regulations, he preferred voluntary standards coming from the industry.

But the auto industry's commitment to voluntarily improve the safety of SUVs is being challenged by a bipartisan group of senators in Washington. During a hearing on SUV safety in the last week of February, Republican Senator John McCain asked, "What is the credibility of the automobile manufacturers when there's a clear record that they opposed seat belts and air bags?" McCain, chair of the Senate commerce committee and other senators may have been peeved by industry executives declaring that the effort to develop voluntary safety standards was not an acknowledgment that there was anything inherently unsafe about SUVs.

As Robert Lange, GM's top safety expert insisted in a statement at the hearing, "Today's SUVs are as safe as passenger cars." *(With data from USA Today, The New York Times and Just-Auto)*

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: If flying is so safe, why do they call the airport the terminal?

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.

RPN AUTO EXTREME AUTO BYTES

Catch AUTO EXTREME every Saturday, 4 PM on RPN 9 and log on to www.autoextreme.tv

Each week, a viewer's question related to cars and motoring gets answered on Auto Extreme. You can get a hard copy every Thursday in the Motoring section of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

How can I save on gas? Does my driving style affect gas consumption?

—Mae Magaya of Dumaguete City

A VITAL key to fuel economy is good and efficient driving. The smoother your driving pattern, the better your fuel economy. Speeding, rapid acceleration and sudden braking wastes gas.

Such driving can actually lower your gas mileage by 33 percent at highway speeds and 5 percent in city streets.

Accelerate gradually. Sudden acceleration injects more fuel than necessary.

Avoid driving too close to the car ahead. Aside from the safety factor, it also wastes fuel because you must constantly brake and accelerate. Unnecessary braking and stopping means more acceleration and more fuel consumed to get you back to speed. It takes up to six times as much fuel to move a car from a full stop than it does if it is moving just a few kilometers per hour.

The ideal driving speed for fuel economy in most cars is 40-60 kph. Extra fuel is burnt in overcoming increased air resistance at high speeds. So faster does not necessarily equal economical.

Shift gears correctly. Driving in wrong gears can increase fuel consumption by 10 percent. If you're driving an automatic, turn the overdrive on and keep it on. Keeping it on allows your vehicle to automatically shift into overdrive, slow the engine and save gas as soon as you hit a certain speed. This also helps reduce engine wear.

Lastly, avoid unnecessary idling. Idling gives you zero kilometer per liter. It takes less fuel to restart a car after the engine has warmed up than to idle it for more than a minute. So if you're going to be stopped for more than 60 seconds turn off your engine. You'll save fuel and money as well as reduce pollution. And remember, there is generally no need to press the accelerator to restart the engine.

PAL soaring; kudos to GM Shaw, new Strada 4x4

WHILE the Philippine Airlines has hiked flights to two tourist destinations in the country, Cathay Pacific, Asia's fourth largest carrier, is bleeding heavily from the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) scare gripping Asia and virtually the world. Already, Cathay officials have plans to ground its fleet next month if demand for travel falls further due to the SARS epidemic plaguing Canada, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Singapore and China. Since SARS surfaced last month, the airline has been absorbing losses of approximately $3 million a day!

But fortunately, not PAL. At least on the home front.

There are more PAL flights these days to Kalibo, Aklan, and Tagbiglaran, Bohol, two Visayan destinations that have become traditional tourist havens for years now. Starting this Holy Week through May, PAL has increased seating capacities by 75 percent on flights to Kalibo and Tagbilaran.

Kalibo, the jump off point to the world-famed Boracay resort island, will increase flights from three to four times daily on April 19, 20, 21, 25 and 27, and on May 1 and 4. Today, April 17, and on April 20, Asia's first airline will have special flights to the Aklan capital. Tagbilaran flights, done four times a week before, are now held daily since April 12 and will last up to May 31. That would mean an additional 444 seats weekly to Tagbilaran, site of the magical chocolate hills, for the duration of summer.

* * *

The major shift has made traveling to Boracay and Tagbilaran a breeze. Whereas before when vacationers had to grapple for seats to get to these places, today it's a virtual walk in the park when one wants a ticket to fly to either of the two tourist sports.

Just consider: PAL will now be offering 4,100 seats per week to Kalibo and Tagbilaran up to the end of May. PAL will also be deploying 148-seater Boeing 737-300s in a monoclass layout on the two routes.

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

As usual, PAL executive Rollie Estabillo has advised passengers to check in two hours before their flight time to help ease check-in hassles at the airport during this peak travel season.

* * *

I raise a glass to the decision of President Macapagal-Arroyo to start the Holy Week vacation on Holy Wednesday. It made traveling by land much easier for our vacationers.

Whereas before when province-bound vacationers had to battle for space on both the road and buses, today we rarely see vacation-mad commuters jockeying for seats at the bus stations found along Edsa and elsewhere in the metropolis. Even both our North and South Expressways are now virtually clog-free, thanks also to civic-spirited citizens helping man traffic there.

The early Holy Week break afforded many urban residents to advance their vacations, thus making both Holy Monday and Holy Tuesday virtual vacation days for thousands of our employees, particularly those on the monthly salary bracket.

* * *

Here's a salute to GM Autoworld Shaw for winning the Retailer of the Year award in the Asian region. The "Goldmark of Excellence Award" is a testament to "the excellent performance of the dealer in the area of customer care, sales and after-sales, finance and administration management."

A total of 852 retailers and dealers from the Asia Pacific joined the "Big Finish" incentive program of General Motors Asia Pacific. Among the 107 survivors, 10 were chosen as "Best of the Best," including GM Autoworld Shaw with Raul Evangelista as general manager.

Said Evangelista: "The Best of the Best Award credits the commendable performance of dealers with the GM Autoworld Asia-Pacific network that met target sales during the last four months of 2002. Also considered were customer satisfaction index ratings, sales attainment for both sales and after-sales and maintaining profitability in the middle of the current market conditions."

Among models sold at GM Autoworld Shaw are Chevrolet, Opel, Subaru and Suzuki.

* * *

An amazing model roaming the metropolis these days is the 2003 Mitsubishi Strada 4x4. It looks rugged from the outside, but from the inside it's a very refined piece of automotive art.

The new Strada, surprise-surprise, comes with an electronically controlled automatic transmission that is coupled with a part-time, 4-wheel drive and synchronizer so you can shift to 4WD on the fly!* Where in the world can you find such beast? It also sports a new front bumper, 16-inch wheels with all-terrain tires, and a TPMS (tire pressure monitoring system). The TPMS lets you monitor, in real time, the pressure and temperature of all tires including spare. It also warns you if there is a slow leak, fast leak or a sudden rise in the temperature through an audible and visible warning. It is so powerful that it really has the "power to move you." I drove it last week and I was moved.

(*This can be done at a speed below 100 km/hour.)

* * *

QUOTE ME. If you're in a hurry to get to where you want to go this Holy Week, slow down. Safe driving is always to slow down. Happy Easter!

E-mail: pr_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

MOTORING

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

FUTURE OF TRANSPORT INDUSTRY

Wide use of CNG-fueled vehicles eyed

By Charles E. Buban

(Last of two parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

THE COMPRESSED natural gas, despite all its possibilities, pose a sort of "chicken and egg" quandary for the Department of Transportation and Communications.

Primarily, the department is looking at how it can convince consumers or motorists to buy CNG vehicles when a filling station for such a fuel is hard to find at the moment.

In the same way, how does the department get energy companies committed to building CNG service stations if few people own these vehicles?

These are just some of the "chicken and egg" situation that Arnel Manresa, chief of the DOTC Road Transportation Planning Division, shared during the recent Transport Philippines (Transphil) 2003 conference held in February at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel in Mandaluyong City.

Despite this situation, Manresa is still optimistic as the DOTC is working with governments, oil companies and transportation researchers to promote the long-term benefits of vehicles that use this pollution-free fuel.

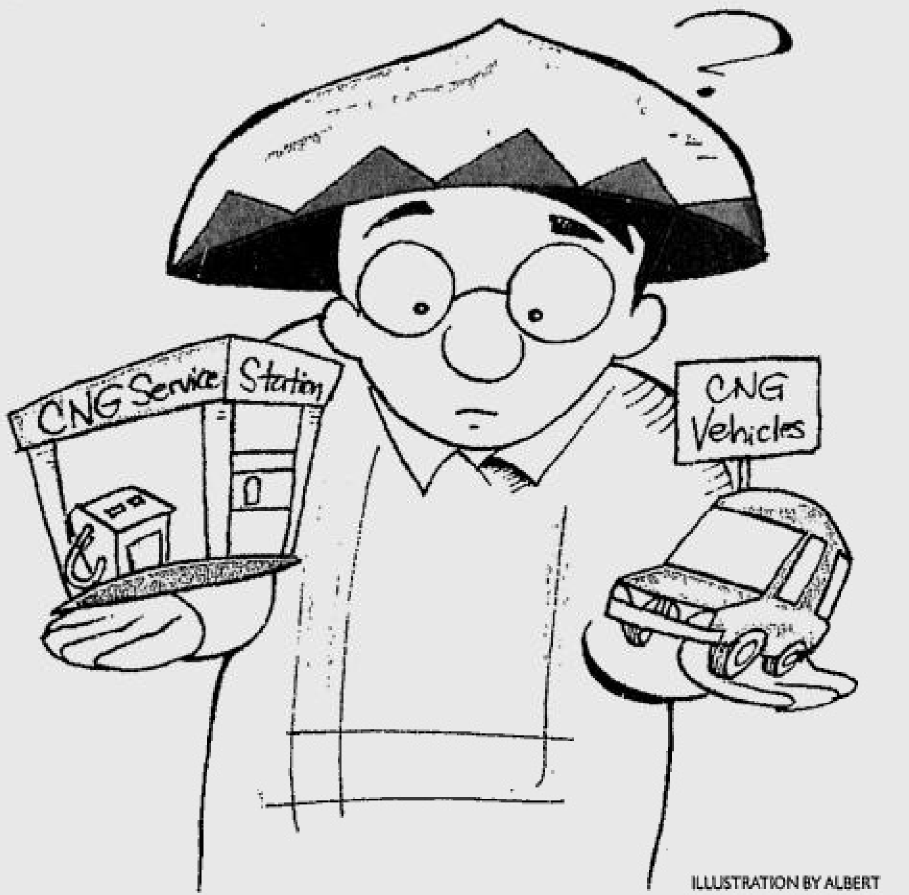


ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Additional structures

"For the CNG to be used by the transport sector in Metro Manila, additional infrastructure facilities such as transmission, distribution and compression are necessary," Manresa informed.

Much more, with the Malampaya gas for power priced at about $3.86 (P205.4) per GJ plus the cost for additional infrastructure, the resulting market price for CNG is estimated at $5.71/GJ or P303.8/GJ at the moment.

"Which is a little costly compared with competing fuel (types) like diesel and gasoline. What we are saying here is that in order for the transport sector to utilize the local gas, industrial and commercial sectors must enter the market," Manresa suggested.

In this manner, Manresa hopes the transport sector will only shoulder minimal costs for infrastructure thereby, decreasing the market price of CNG.

Converting engine

On engine conversion, Manresa revealed that it's better to go for a converted CNG vehicle in a dedicated setup.

The advantage of this option,according to him, is its benefit of lower vehicle emission and savings on fuel costs compared to hybrid vehicles.

It is also in this setup that a CNG vehicle can optimize its performance and efficiency.

But the conversion process, which involves changing the fuel injector into a gas regulator, expanding the area of combustion of the engine and reducing piston, is still not consumer friendly at the moment.

At the moment, a CNG engine costs 75 to 100 percent more than regular diesel engines.

Making CNG vehicles attractive

Alternative fueled vehicles like CNG often conjure up visions of heaviness and clunkiness. This certainly is not the image that the DOTC wants to cultivate with CNG vehicles.

But for CNG to be accepted, some of it's not so attractive features must be remedied. A dedicated CNG vehicle can travel only on a very limited range, and the unavailability of a refueling station in remote areas limits its coverage.

Also because of the gaseous nature of this fuel, it must be stored onboard a vehicle in either a compressed gaseous state or in a liquefied state. This means that CNG must be stored in a heavy, bulky and specially designed cylinders.

"Finding a space to install the cylinder becomes a problem and space availability inside the vehicle is reduced. However, continuing research and development in storage systems will eventually reduce the weight penalty for CNG," hoped Manresa.

Safety concerns

Safety is also an issue that People often associate this fuel with exploding LPG tanks.

However, Manresa believes consumers should not fear CNG vehicles as these are comparable to the risk consumers have with conventional automotive fuels.

The DOTC believes that vehicle and energy companies, as well as local and national governments, must now work on a common path to make CNG vehicles a reality.

Here are various reasons that might provide a kick-start for this country to support CNG:

- It could be economic, with the cost of gasoline rising almost weekly.
- It could be political, since the country is a signatory to the global emissions standards.
- With the number of cities all over the world most polluted or have serious pollution problems, health issues could tip the scale toward developing cleaner energy sooner, rather than later.

Hone your bike skills this summer

By Charles E. Buban

NOVICE riders and even the experts will have a chance to hone their motorcycle riding skills even further as Manilabikes.com is bringing again in May trainers from two of the world's most respected riding schools from California and Australia.

The two-day event—from May 3 to 4—will be held at the Batangas Race Circuit with trainers from California and Australian Superbike Schools leading the lecture and riding clinics.

Manilabikes.com, which carries an assortment of Japanese and European bikes—big bore Cruisers, V-Twins, Supersport, Sport, Streetsport, Touring, Standard, Dual Purpose, Dirt and even small displacement Scooters—is holding this event as part of the Bike Week celebration slated from April 24 to 30.

STUDENTS will be shown the the proper way of cornering and other riding techniques.

SUBERBIKE School students are already reaping honors. For instance, Mike Chan, Jeff Archer and Rolf Wiltscheck emerged as winners at the Casino Filipino Superbike Grand Prix.

Aussie experts

Over 100 local motorcycle enthusiasts will receive advanced motorcycle training from a team of six instructors from the Australian Superbike School.

No less than Steve Brouggy, one-time holder of 10 Australian lap records and at present the director of the Australian Superbike School, will be flying in to personally conduct the training sessions.

Brouggy is the only person in the world endorsed to teach Keith Code's motorcycle riding format while he is not present.

Code and his training system has been applied by various world champions and he himself has trained over 40,000 road riders around the world.

"It's very important to have a good grasp of the technique. A thorough understanding of the tools and techniques will allow one to discover the art of cornering," he said during his last visit here in November. "We know what you do in a corner and what it takes to get it right, what can go wrong and how to fix it."

Popular riding schools

The California Superbike School, on the other hand, is one of the world's most popular riding schools today.

With presence in four continents—the United States, Europe, Australia and Asia—the school has scheduled clinics in 22 countries with Malaysia and the Philippines as the only two countries in Asia.

The school also employs the Keith Code's training system, which is based on four levels where one level takes a whole day to complete and students must go through levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 in progressing order.

Rider confidence

Level 1 will tackle riders confidence problems, which make up 90 percent of the course including proper corner entry and exit speeds, how much throttle to use, and how far over to lean the bike over.

Level 2, on the other hand, integrates vision skills with exercises learned in the first level. Rider-machine integration will be tackled in the third level and will explain how and what can one do in handling motorcycle effects.

The last level combines all three previous levels and will show students the strong and weak points and what aspects to be improved.

All of these stages will be covered this May.

Manilabikes.com can also be reached at their other website, the wwww.motorcycleasia.com.

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Hyundai owners to get roadside help this Holy Week

OWNERS of all Hyundai vehicles can have a worry-free trip this Holy Week to Baguio and Tagaytay, thanks to the Summer Road Assistance Program initiated by Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. (Hari).

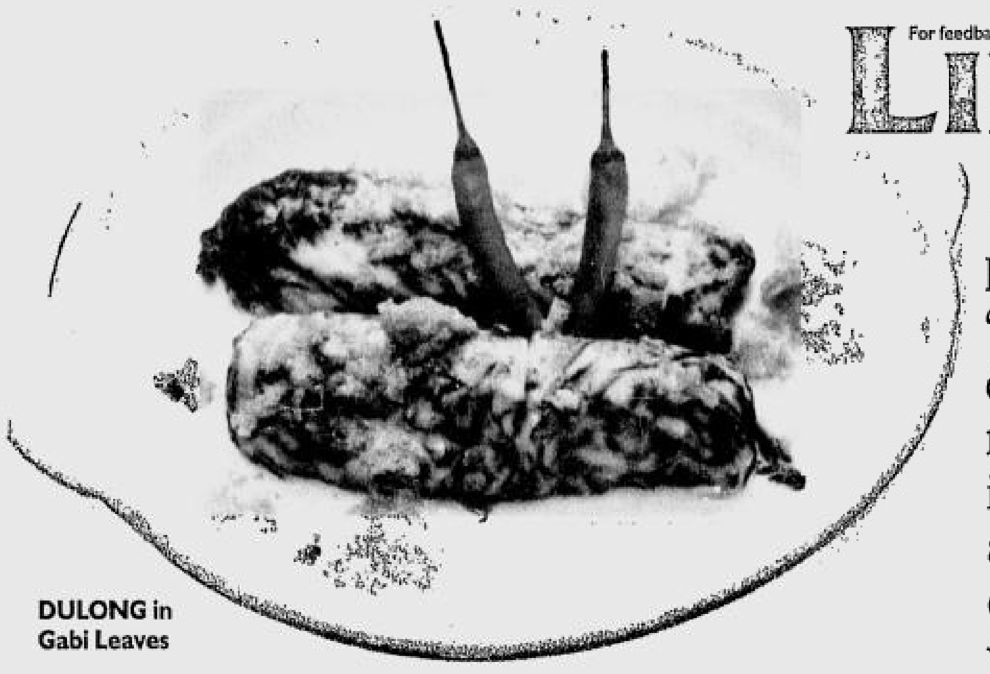
Hari has set up tents in the two summer destinations from April 16 to 20 to provide ready help to Hyundai owners who are expected to take their Starex vans on vacation with their family.

Fred Jose, Hari service manager, said Hyundai owners can have their vehicles checked at the tents set up in Baguio and Tagaytay. Those who would experience problems along the way can also seek help from the Hari team of technicians who have been deployed in the two cities.

Hyundai Pampanga and Hyundai Laguna are taking part in the Summer Road Assistance Program. The two dealerships are part of Hari's nationwide network of dealers.

Hari is the official distributor of Hyundai vans and cars in the country

For feedback, text us at (0919)880-33-54 or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph
LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso


DULONG in Gabi Leaves

Microscopic 'dulong' doesn't get much respect in the culinary arena but it's quite a versatile fish

Tiny fish packs delicious punch

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio

LENT is always the best time to try new meatless dishes. You can have your fill of veggies and fish prepared in a variety of ways.

One fish that doesn't get much attention in the culinary arena is our very own *dulong*.

Scientifically known as *pandaca pigmaea*, *dulong* is the smallest fish in the world and is indigenous to the Philippines. The microscopic fish can be prepared in so many ways.

Because it is tiny, *dulong* is usually sautéed in olive or corn oil with lots of garlic and chilies. It is then served over toasted French baguette slices as an appetizer.

Sometimes, *dulong* is used as stuffing (*relleno*-style) with chopped tomatoes, onions, garlic and pepper.

Some restaurants wrap it in banana leaves and cook it in vinegar until dry. *Dulong* is also mixed into an egg batter and fried as patties.

At O Kitchen, the fish has become a mouthwatering entrée—Dulong in Gabi Leaves, which is heaps of *dulong* carefully wrapped in *gabi* leaves and simmered in coconut milk. It can be served with fresh chili and *chicharon*.

"It's been one of our bestsellers since most of our diners find it very light, unique and tasty," says Offie Quiazon Benavides, owner of O Kitchen (188 E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Libis, QC, tel. 633-7958).

To make this dish, *dulong* should be bought fresh from the market, washed thoroughly and drained well. "*Dulong* is a cheap but nutritious fish. You can buy it in a wet market for only P100 per kg," says Benavides.

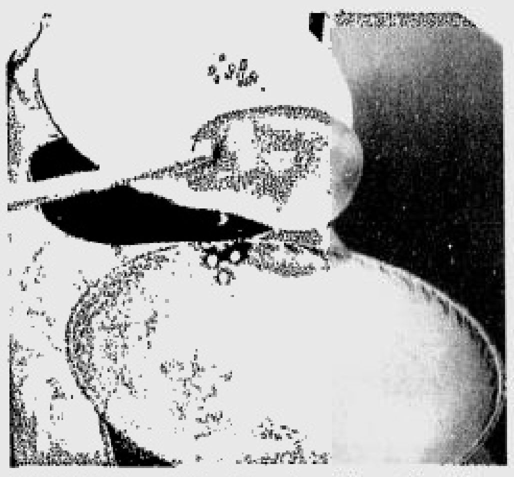
The *gabi* leaves, which should be very young, have to be thoroughly cleaned in running water.

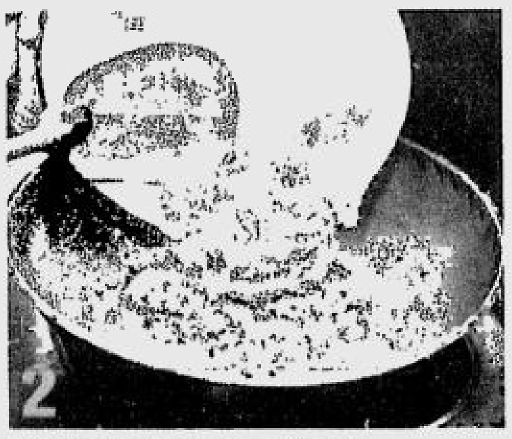
Ingredients

150 g fresh *dulong*
½ tsp garlic, chopped
1 tbsp ginger, chopped
1 tbsp onions, chopped
fresh chopped chili
1 c coconut milk
1 c soup stock
2 tbsp cooking oil
salt and pepper to taste
gabi leaves, blanched
(This recipe makes about three to four pieces of *dulong* rolls.)

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

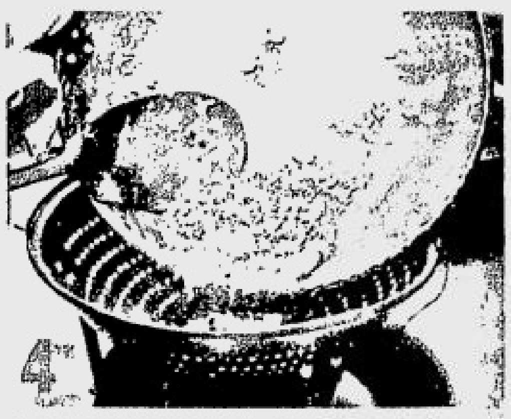
STEP BY STEP


HEAT oil in a skillet. Sauté garlic until golden brown. Add onion, ginger and chili. Mix well.

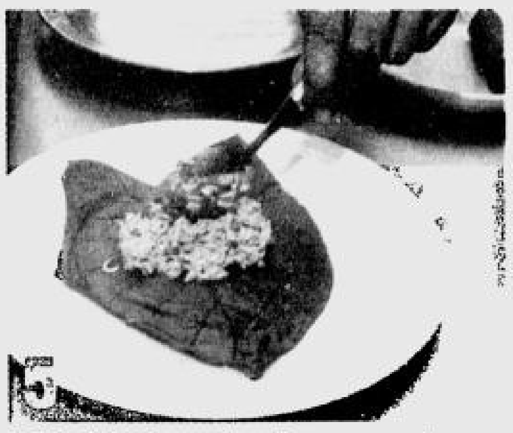


STIR in *dulong*. Season with salt.

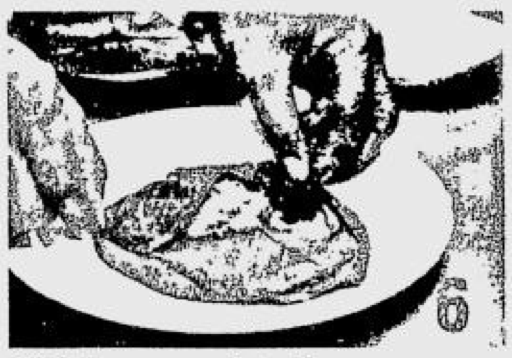
POUR in half a cup of coconut milk. Cook for 15 mins. Continue simmering until the mixture slightly dries up.



REMOVE from fire. Strain to remove the juice.

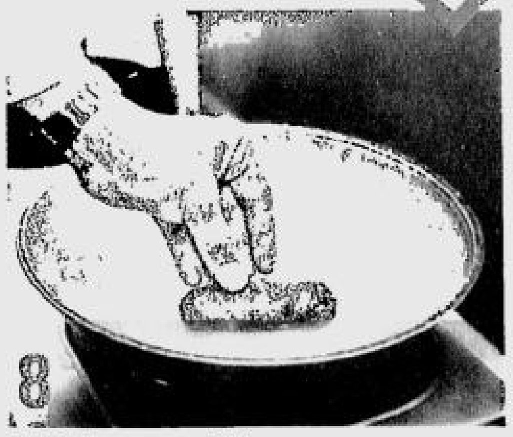


LAY *gabi* leaf on a plate. Put a scoop of cooked *dulong* on top of the leaf.

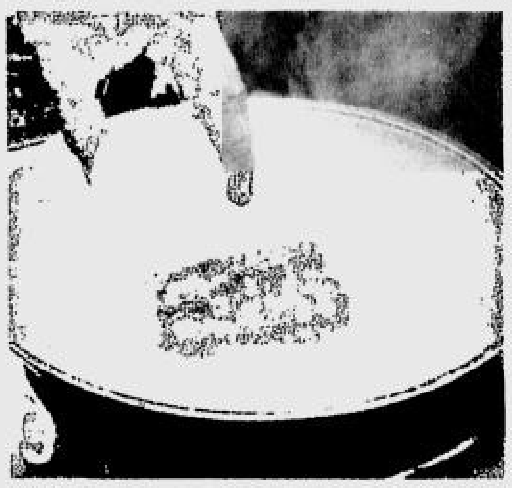


ROLL the wrapper. Set aside.

REPEAT 5 and 6 until you have used all the cooked *dulong*. In a separate pan, put soup stock.



ADD the wrapped *dulong*.



ADD the remaining ½ c coconut milk. Let boil.

TRANSFER to a serving platter. Before serving, top *dulong* with *chicharon* and chili (optional).

Changes in class sked

MINOR changes have been made in the schedule of Reggie Aspiras' cooking classes due to the holiday break.

April 23 (morning class)—My Sinful Cheesecakes—Café Au Lait and Chocolate , White Chocolate and Lemon , Espresso and Chocolate Swirl , Old Fashioned New York-style with two sauces: mango and berry, My Favorite Blueberry Cheesecake

April 23 (afternoon class)—Paellas—valenciana, Primavera, Marinara, Farmer'S Style, Black

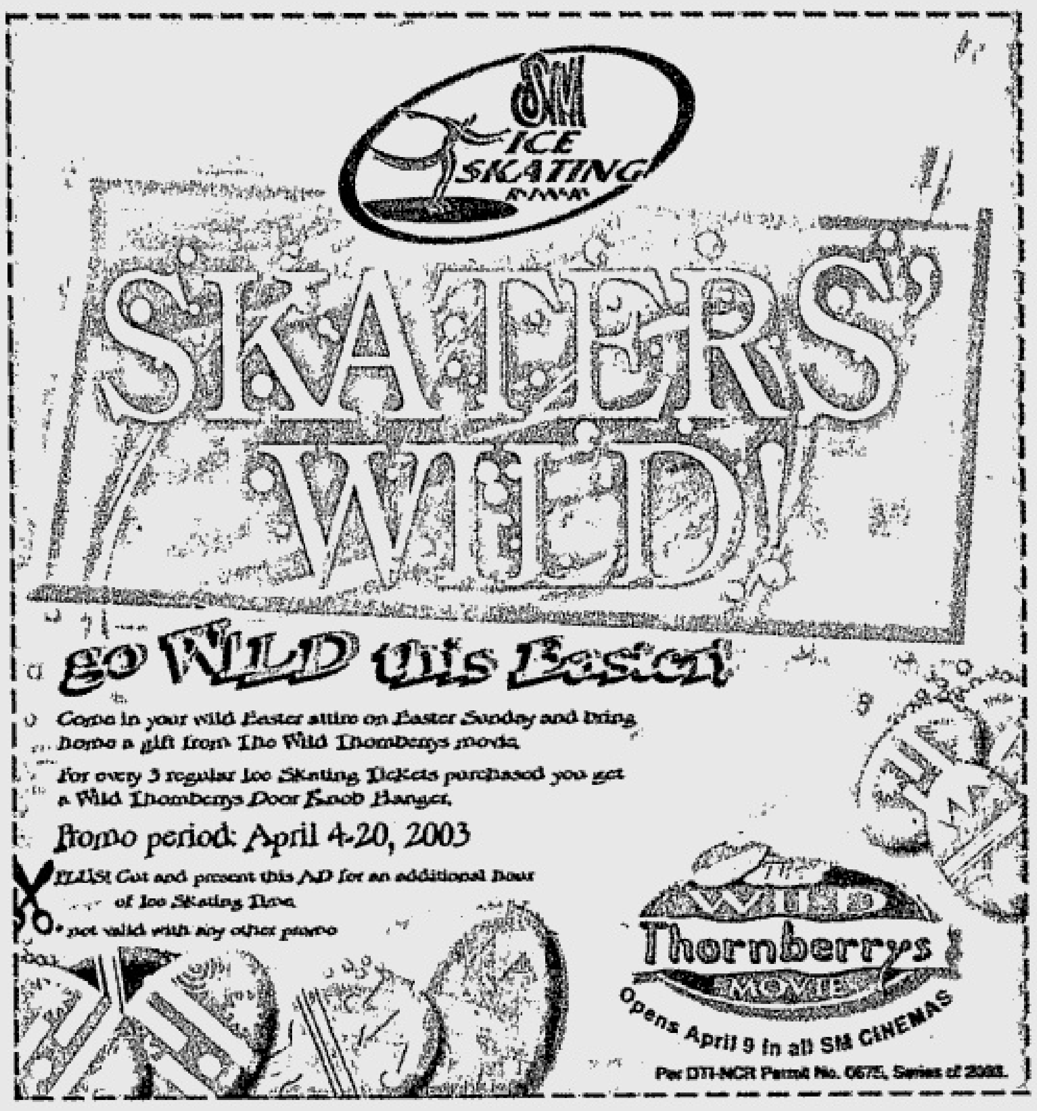
April 25—Basic Gourmet Burgers and Buns—Sour Bread Buns, Herb and Spice Buns, Burgers—Turkey, Rib-eye, Crab, Mushroom, Lamb, Chicken, etc.—10 burgers in all with side dishes, relishes, mayonnaise blends, sauces

April 28—Singaporean cuisine 101—Bah Ku Te, Singaporean Rojak Salad, Laksa , Singapore's Chili Crab, Tamarind Oxtail Stew (Buntot Asam Pedas), the real technique in making delicious Hainanese Chicken, Chicken Rice and sauces.

April 30 (morning class)—Pizza Basics—thin, thick and stuffed pizza dough. Toppings: garlic anchovy, four cheeses, seafood, Italian sausage and mixed meat, fresh tomato, grilled vegetables and pesto, overstuffed pan pizza; (afternoon class)—Fresh Pasta for Beginners. Learn to make fresh pasta from scratch—fettuccine, ravioli, lasagne, canneloni, black pasta, pasta tri-colore. Over 12 recipes that include, sauces, stuffing and the technique to making perfect fresh pasta every time!

May 2—Fondues—Cheese two kinds: meat, chicken and seafood with six savory fondue sauces, fruit with chocolate truffle sauce

Monday and Friday classes start at 9 a.m.; Wednesdays 9 a.m.-12 p.m. (morning class) and 1:30-4:30 p.m. (afternoon class). Call Cynthia at 928-9296, 927-3008 or 633-5162, or visit 3/F Bon Appetit, Shangri-la Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City.


SM ICE SKATING RINK
SKATERS' WILD!
go WILD this Easter!
Come in your wild Easter attire on Easter Sunday and bring home a gift from The Wild Thornberrys movie.
For every 3 regular Ice Skating Tickets purchased you get a Wild Thornberrys Door Knob Hanger.
Promo period: April 4-20, 2003
PLUS! Cut and present this AD for an additional hour of Ice Skating Time.
* not valid with any other promo
The Wild Thornberrys Movie
Opens April 9 in all SM CINEMAS
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0675, Series of 2003.

WESTIN EASTER CHOC-FULL ADVENTURE WITH m&m's
enjoy egg hunts, Timezone kiddie rides and arcade games,
Mad Science show, game booths, Velcro Wall, Bouncing Castle and loads of prizes and give aways. Get tickets to the great Easter Party when you check-in or take the scrumptious Easter Brunch Buffet at Café Plaza.
ROOM RATES PER NIGHT: P4,500 NET/SUPERIOR - P5,500 NET/DELUXE - P6,500 NET/WESTIN EXECUTIVE CLUB
9 am - EASTER MASS/10:30 AM - 2:30 AM - EASTER BRUNCH BUFFET: 925++ adults/500++ kids 12 yrs and below/ 10 am - 3 pm
EGGHUNT & FUN ACTIVITIES at Transparent Garden Tent
Call reservations at 832 6991 or email: reservations@westinmanila.com
THE WESTIN PHILIPPINE PLAZA
CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard Pasay City, 1300 Manila, Philippines
Telephone (632) 551-5555
Fax (632) 551-5610
www.westin.com/manila
CONDITIONS: Maximum of 3 nights to get free extra night (room only). Rooms are subject to availability. Advance reservation is advised. Easter tickets are given per stay not per room night. One ticket for every Easter Brunch Buffet availed of. Rate is valid to local residents and expats with ACRs. Package may not be combine with other promo or discount offers and may not be used for group or corporate bookings. Other conditions applied.

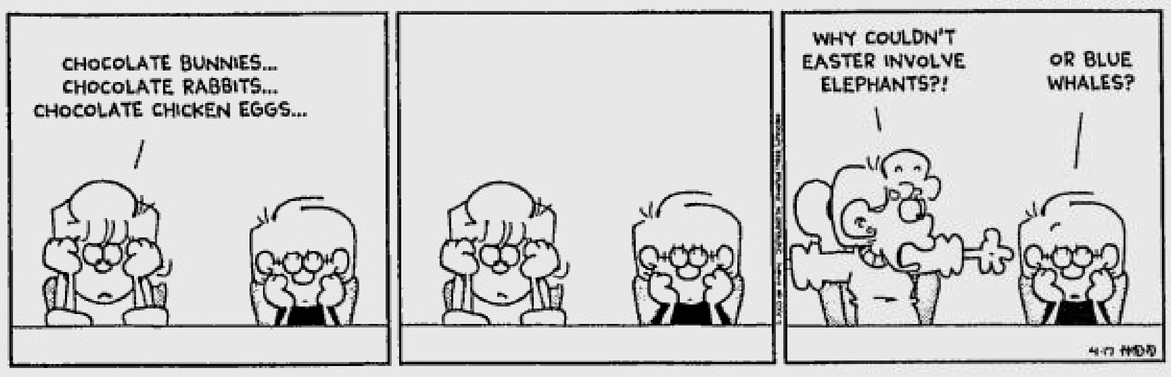
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ComicRelief

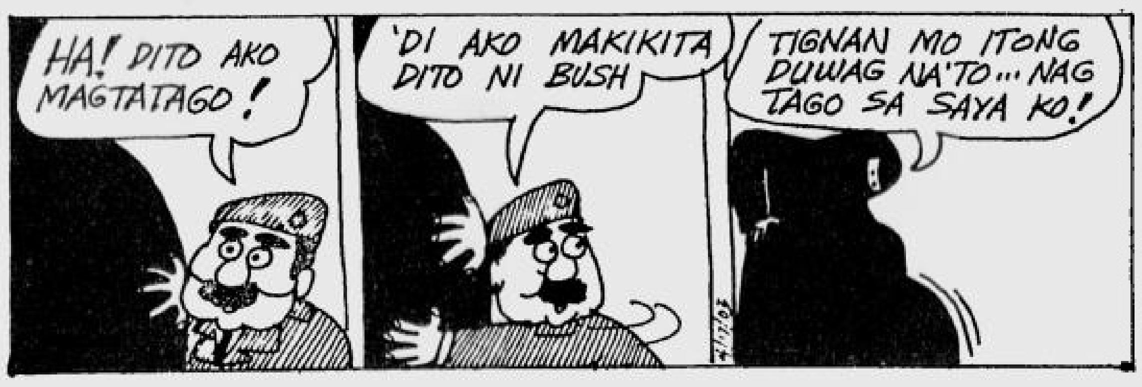
e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2003

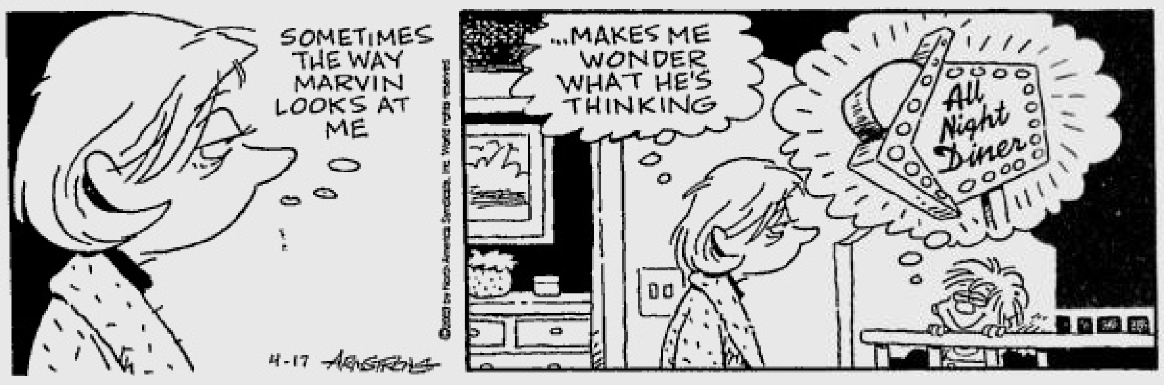
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


CHOCOLATE BUNNIES... CHOCOLATE RABBITS... CHOCOLATE CHICKEN EGGS...
WHY COULDN'T EASTER INVOLVE ELEPHANTS?!
OR BLUE WHALES?
4-17 AMEND

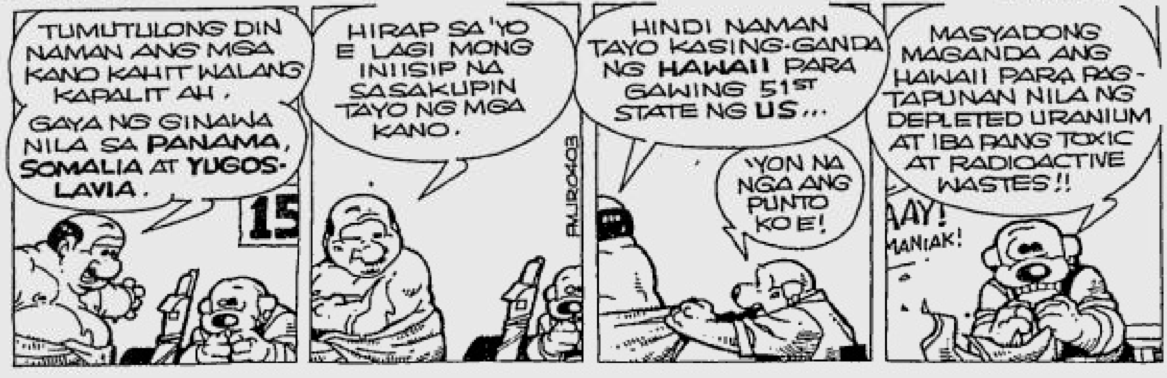
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


HA! DITO AKO MAGTATAGO!
'DI AKO MAKIKITA DITO NI BUSH
TIGNAN MO ITONG DUWAG NA'TO... NAG TAGO SA SAYA KO!

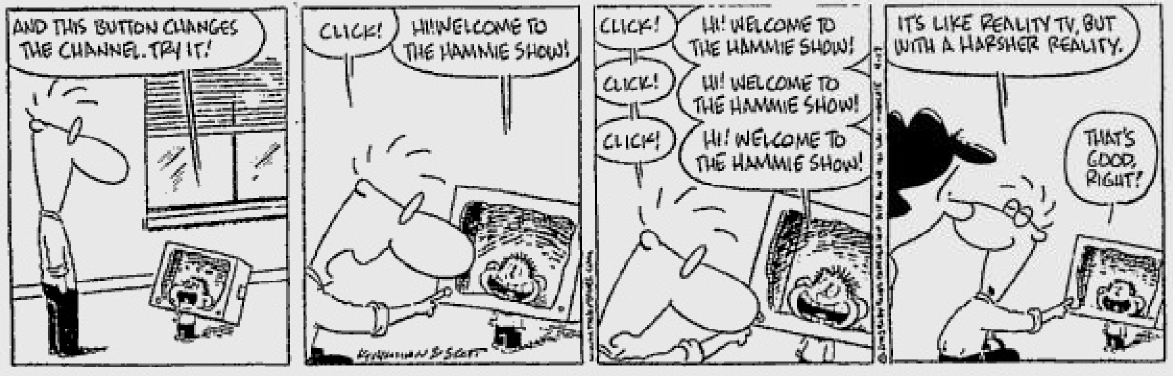
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


SOMETIMES THE WAY MARVIN LOOKS AT ME
...MAKES ME WONDER WHAT HE'S THINKING
All Night Diner
4-17 ARMSTRONG

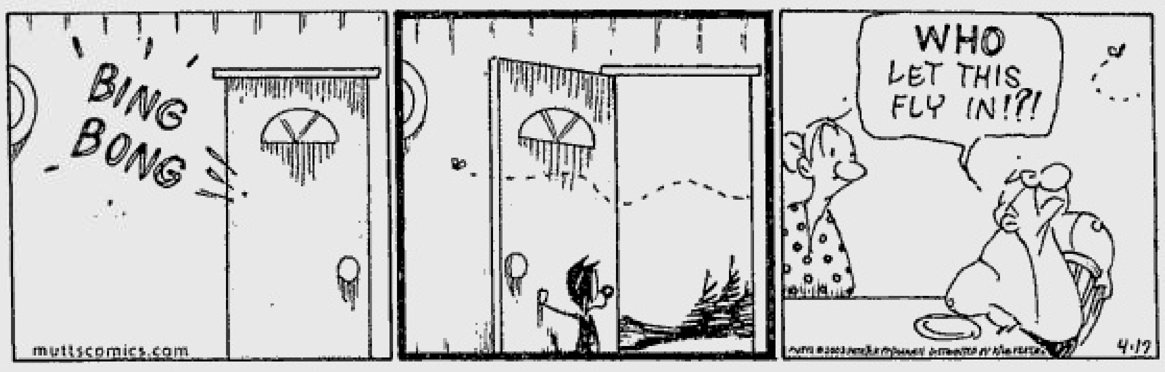
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


TUMUTULONG DIN NAMAN ANG MGA KANO KAHIT WALANG KAPALIT AH.
GAYA NG GINAWA NILA SA PANAMA, SOMALIA AT YUGOSLAVIA.
15
HIRAP SA 'YO E LAGI MONG INIISIP NA SASAKUPIN TAYO NG MGA KANO.
HINDI NAMAN TAYO KASING-GANDA NG HAWAII PARA GAWING 51ST STATE NG US...
'YON NA NGA ANG PUNTO KO E!
MASYADONG MAGANDA ANG HAWAII PARA PAGTAPUNAN NILA NG DEPLETED URANIUM AT IBA PANG TOXIC AT RADIOACTIVE WASTES!!
AAY! MANIAK!

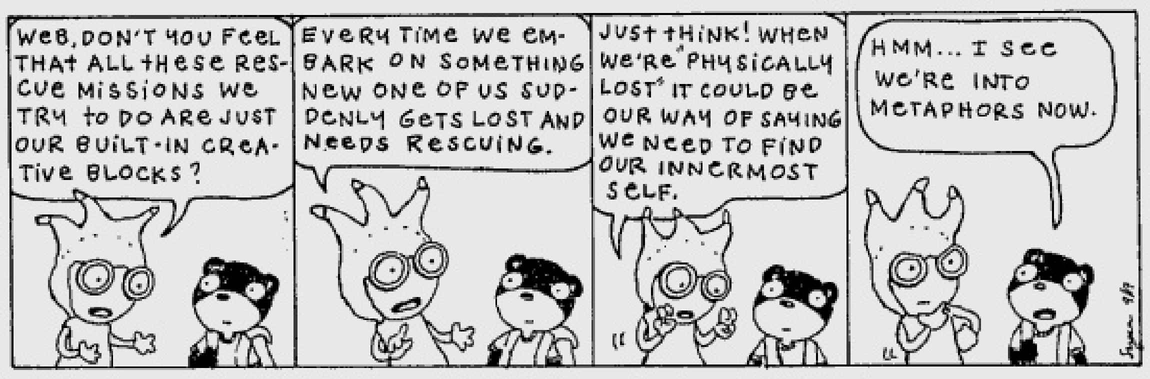
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


AND THIS BUTTON CHANGES THE CHANNEL. TRY IT!
CLICK!
HI! WELCOME TO THE HAMMIE SHOW!
CLICK!
HI! WELCOME TO THE HAMMIE SHOW!
CLICK!
HI! WELCOME TO THE HAMMIE SHOW!
CLICK!
HI! WELCOME TO THE HAMMIE SHOW!
IT'S LIKE REALITY TV, BUT WITH A HARSHER REALITY.
THAT'S GOOD, RIGHT?
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

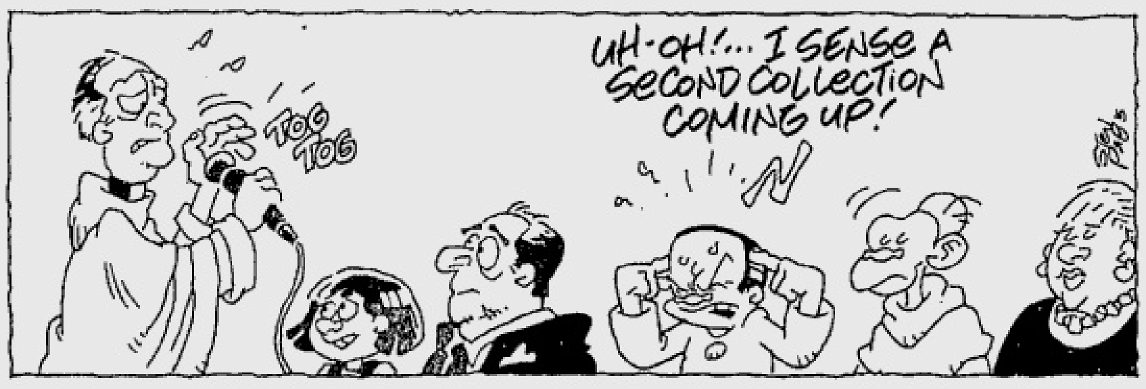
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


BING BONG
mutts comics.com
WHO LET THIS FLY IN!?!
4-17

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WEB, DON'T YOU FEEL THAT ALL THESE RESCUE MISSIONS WE TRY TO DO ARE JUST OUR BUILT-IN CREATIVE BLOCKS?
EVERY TIME WE EMBARK ON SOMETHING NEW ONE OF US SUDDENLY GETS LOST AND NEEDS RESCUING.
JUST THINK! WHEN WE'RE "PHYSICALLY LOST" IT COULD BE OUR WAY OF SAYING WE NEED TO FIND OUR INNERMOST SELF.
HMM... I SEE WE'RE INTO METAPHORS NOW.

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


TOG TOG
UH-OH!... I SENSE A SECOND COLLECTION COMING UP!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a sharp mind. Invariably, you will use it to protect others. You defend those who need you. You believe in justice and truth. Privately, you are emotionally deep and complex. However, others see nobility in you. Work very hard for what you want this year—because there will be a payoff!
Birthdate of: Conan O'Brien, talk-show host; Hayley Mills, actress; Eric McCormack, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Things are definitely improving. In fact, as this day wears on, they get better and better. You might encounter a surprise this evening!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): What you really need is some private time just to be by yourself. Give yourself this opportunity. It's not an indulgence; it's a necessity.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Conversations with friends take a more jocular tone, even if you still are debating about who owns what or who has the responsibility for something. This is an improvement.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Do not shy away from taking on extra responsibilities right now. You have been chosen because others have faith in you. Now you must have faith in yourself.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Make plans to travel somewhere, because you want to expand your horizons right now. If you can't travel far, at least be a tourist in your own city.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Work to clear up messy details about insurance, taxes, debt and shared property. Once things are better defined, you will have greater peace of mind.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have an opportunity to learn more about how to relate skillfully to those who are closest to you. There is no family on this planet that does not suffer from negativity sometimes. Relationships with others require skill.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Do not let your enthusiasm to get organized alienate those around you. As the old saying goes, "What you gain on the swings you lose on the roundabouts."

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Your romantic prospects are looking very pleasant. New love can enter your life. And a new way of looking at existing relationships can also please you.

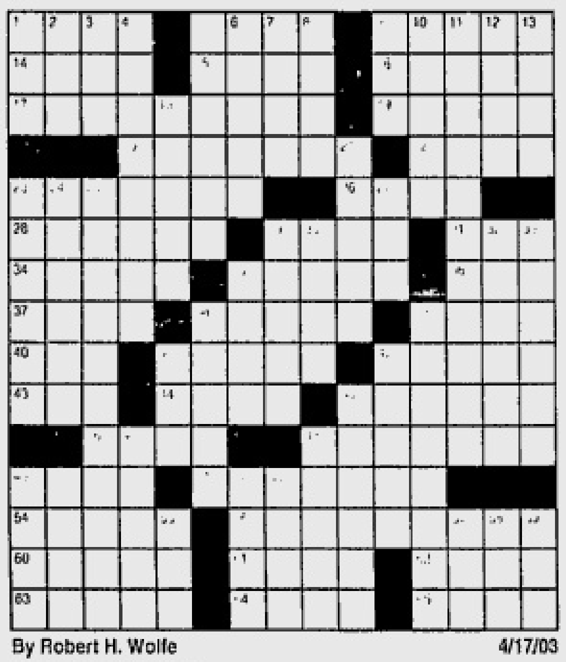
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Do what you can to feel more secure about where you live. You might want to do repairs or make sure that you and others feel more comfortable at home.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Short trips, shopping sprees, buying and selling, plus wheeling and dealing are your focus today. You can make some unusual financial transactions now.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might want to buy something new to wear, because you want to change your image a little. This is good. As we change, our appearances change also. (Sometimes to our chagrin.)

DAILY CROSSWORD

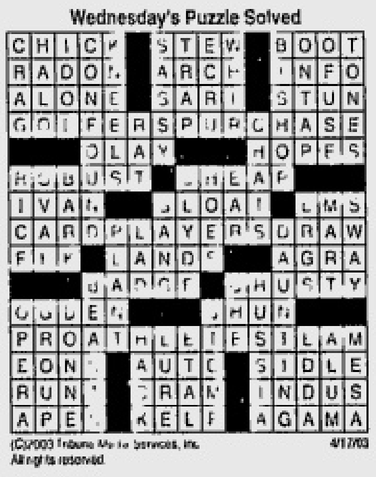
ACROSS
1 Actor O'Shea
5 Way to go
9 Found a new perch
14 Tel __-Jaffa
15 Height: pref.
16 Enthusiastic shout
17 Unknot cravats?
19 Linda or Dale
20 Eurasian ruminant
22 Holiday preludes
23 Mel and Hoot
26 Different
28 Turmoil
29 Up for it
31 2nd letter add-on
34 Piece of paper
35 Sen. Hatch
36 __ of the blue
37 Lukas of "Witness"
38 Arctic goose
39 Quote as an example
40 BPOE member
41 Obliterate
42 Poet Alighieri
43 Std.
44 Puppy bark
45 Chartered
46 Jed of "The Chris Isaak Show"
48 Removes from office
49 Shakespeare's river
51 Arnold's crime
54 Glorifies
56 Divide ships' records?
60 Boredom
61 Victory signs
62 Burn balm
63 Yielder
64 Annoying one
65 Sobbed



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY
4/17/03

DOWN
1 Pas' mates
2 __ had it!
3 Tyler of "The Lord of the Rings"
4 Supervises
5 Inventor's document
6 Etching fluids
7 Forest unit
8 Fuel-line element
9 Deli loaf
10 Place for icicles
11 Barbershops?
12 Top-notch
13 Flip
18 Fowl perch
21 Pay up
23 Wildcatter's strike
24 Collect a lungful
25 Ruin an electrical circuit?
27 Berman or Canou
29 Get a hold onto
30 "Rule Britannia" composer
32 Gaiter
33 Spirited mounts
35 Evangelist Roberts
38 Brittany port
39 Rules of faith
41 Ogle
42 Bus terminal
45 Stand against
47 Provide with a trait
48 Small valleys
49 Actor Baldwin
50 Directional pointer
52 Invitation letters
53 Fencer's foil
55 Formal address
57 Spanish cheer
58 Republican letters
59 Put in position

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved



C	H	I	C	K	■	S	T	E	W	■	B	O	O	T
R	A	D	O	N	■	A	R	C	H	■	I	N	F	O
A	L	O	N	E	■	S	A	R	I	■	S	T	U	N
G	O	L	F	E	R	S	P	U	R	C	H	A	S	E
■	■	■	O	L	A	Y	■	■	■	H	O	P	E	S
R	O	B	U	S	T	■	C	H	E	A	P	■	■	■
I	V	A	N	■	■	B	L	O	A	T	■	E	M	S
C	A	R	D	P	L	A	Y	E	R	S	D	R	A	W
F	I	R	■	L	A	N	D	S	■	■	A	G	R	A
■	■	■	B	A	D	G	E	■	[illegible]	H	U	S	T	Y
[illegible]	O	D	E	N	■	■	■	[illegible]	H	U	N	■	■	■
P	R	O	A	T	H	L	E	T	E	S	I	L	A	M
E	O	N	[illegible]	■	A	U	T	O	■	S	I	D	L	E
R	U	N	[illegible]	■	[illegible]	R	A	M	■	I	N	D	U	S
A	P	E	[illegible]	■	K	E	L	P	■	A	G	A	M	A

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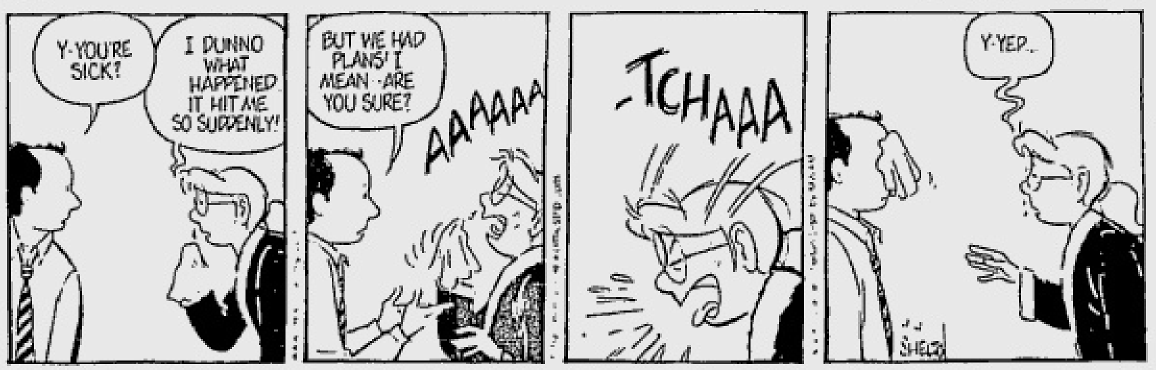
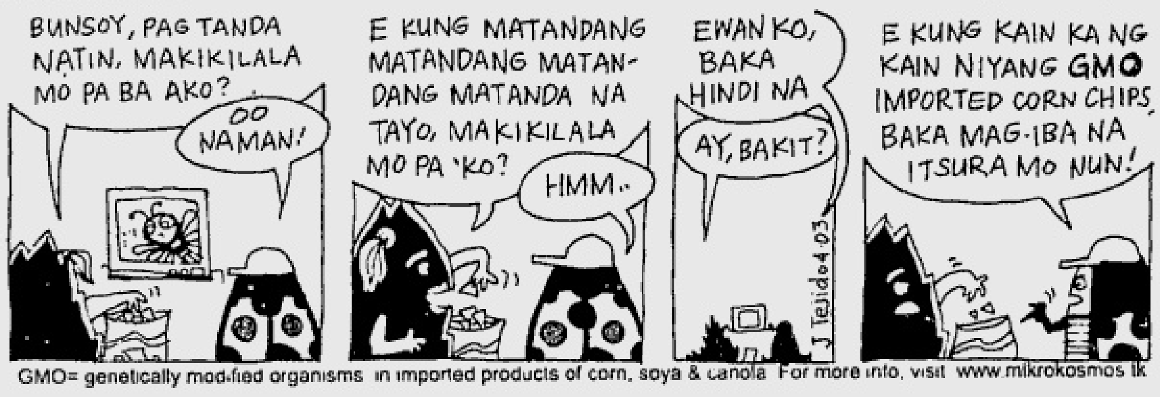
4/17/03

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

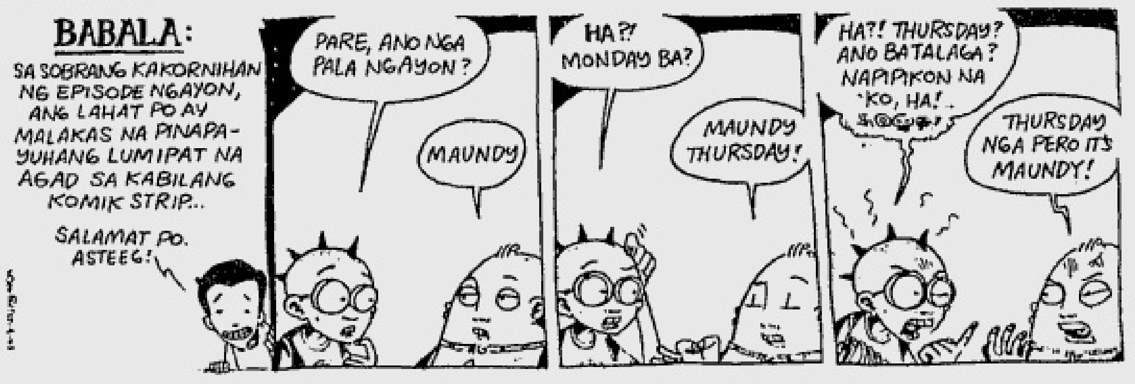

Y-YOU'RE SICK?
I DUNNO WHAT HAPPENED IT HIT ME SO SUDDENLY!
BUT WE HAD PLANS! I MEAN - ARE YOU SURE?
AAAAAA
-TCHAAA
Y-YEP..
SHELTON

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

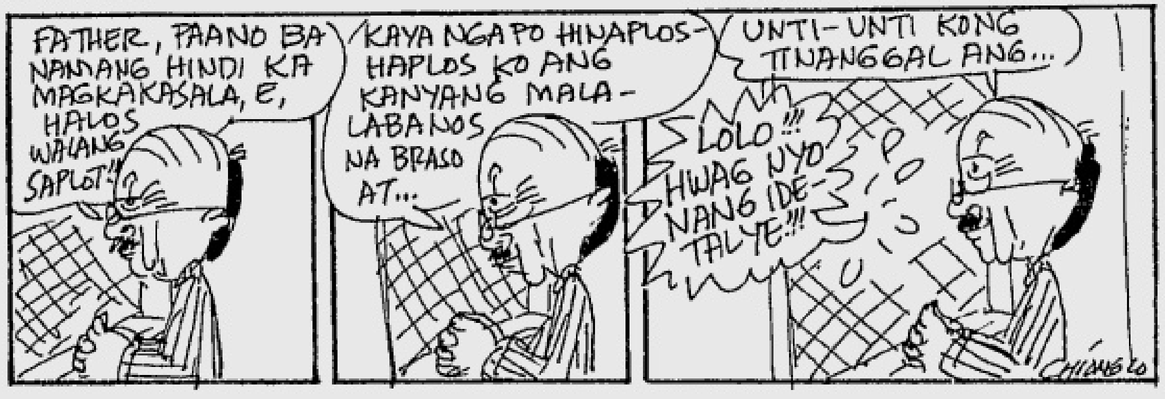

BUNSOY, PAG TANDA NATIN, MAKIKILALA MO PA BA AKO?
OO NAMAN!
E KUNG MATANDANG MATANDANG MATANDANG MATANDA NA TAYO, MAKIKILALA MO PA 'KO?
HMM..
EWAN KO, BAKA HINDI NA
AY, BAKIT?
E KUNG KAIN KA NG KAIN NIYANG GMO IMPORTED CORN CHIPS, BAKA MAG-IBA NA ITSURA MO NUN!
J Tejido 4.03

GMO= genetically modified organisms in imported products of corn, soya & canola For more info, visit www.mikrokosmos.tk

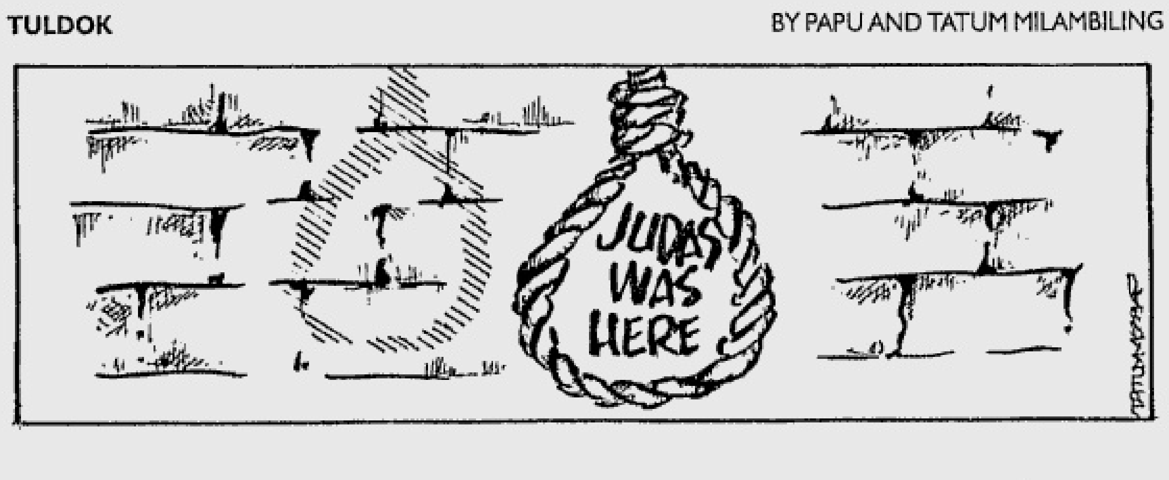
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


BABALA:
SA SOBRANG KAKORNIHAN NG EPISODE NGAYON, ANG LAHAT PO AY MALAKAS NA PINAPAYUHANG LUMIPAT NA AGAD SA KABILANG KOMIK STRIP...
SALAMAT PO. ASTEEG!
PARE, ANO NGA PALA NGAYON?
MAUNDY
HA?! MONDAY BA?
MAUNDY THURSDAY!
HA?! THURSDAY? ANO BA TALAGA? NAPIPIKON NA 'KO, HA!
THURSDAY NGA PERO IT'S MAUNDY!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


FATHER, PAANO BA NAMANG HINDI KA MAGKAKASALA, E, HALOS WALANG SAPLOT!
KAYA NGA PO HINAPLOS-HAPLOS KO ANG KANYANG MALALABANOS NA BRASO AT...
UNTI-UNTI KONG TINANGGAL ANG...
LOLO!!! HWAG NYO NANG IDETALYE!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


JUDAS WAS HERE
TATUM&PAPU

Kid-friendly weekly menu guide

By Dorothy MJ Ferreria

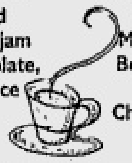
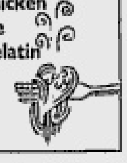
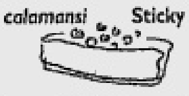
IT'S that time of the year again when our household staff would normally take their summer vacation.

For convenience some households have food delivered at their doorsteps from establishments within the area. This option can dent your budgets before you know it, and is considered practical only from time to time and not on a daily basis. Get real—we cannot have pizza or Chinese take-out every day of the week.

The situation of having no cook in the next few weeks can be turned around as an opportunity to bond with the kids—in the kitchen.

Believe me, kids are always looking for things to do, and assigning them to take care of the meals, from the selection of the menu to the marketing, the cooking and the serving, can be a fun activity for them. They must, however, be supervised by a responsible adult. This is very important as we want to minimize, if not eliminate, accidents in the kitchen.

Here we offer a summer menu guide that kids 12 years old and above can handle. It is a fun and flexible menu. Although we present two separate menus in a day for lunch and dinner, a menu can be chosen for the day for as long as quantities are adjusted to cover both lunch and dinner. Also, the number of viands can be lessened if necessary to accommodate budget and time constraints. So allow your kids to have fun in the kitchen in the next few weeks. After all, mothers, too, deserve a break this summer.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
MONDAY	Cereal with milk and sliced bananas Toasted bread Butter and fruit jam Vienna sausage Coffee/Hot chocolate	Chinese paella Almond jelly with canned Mandarin oranges 	Fried fish sticks with bottled chili sauce Sautéed sayote strips with carrots and canned corn Rice Chilled melon with macapuno ice cream
TUESDAY	Corned beef omelet Toasted bread Butter and fruit jam Coffee, hot chocolate, milk or fruit juice 	Beef Kalitiran in classic brown sauce Mashed potatoes Boiled sweet corn on the cob Chilled ripe mango a la mode	Seafood pancit canton Turbo chicken Rice Buko gelatin 
WEDNESDAY	Hotcake with butter and maple syrup Pan-grilled sweet ham Coffee, hot chocolate, milk or fruit juice 	Chicken and vegetable Spaghetti pie Pizza *pandesal* Tiramisu 	Embutido Store-bought Amoy-style vegetable *lumpia* Rice Mais con hielo with cornflakes
THURSDAY	Oatmeal with cinnamon and raisins Croissant Butter and fruit jam Coffee or fruit juice	Chicken arroz caldo Fried tokwa strips with dipping sauce Fresh watermelon shake 	Fish and vegetable Tempura Beef Sukiyaki Rice Durian ice cream
FRIDAY	Cereal with milk Toasted bread Butter and fruit jam Coffee or hot chocolate Papaya with *calamansi* 	Tossed green salad with creamy garlic dressing Roast beef Rice Sticky rice with mangoes	Steamed chicken with ginger sauce Lumpiang shanghai Rice Canned lychee with crushed ice
SATURDAY	Garlic rice Adobo flakes Fried egg sunny side up Coffee, hot chocolate or milk Fresh mango shake 	Pasta in white sauce with chicken and mushrooms Garlic bread Pandan iced tea 	Sweet and sour pork Steamed fish restaurant-style Rice Mocha ice cream with coffee jelly
SUNDAY	Hotcake with orange honey and butter Crispy honeycured bacon Coffee, milk or hot chocolate Fresh fruit cocktail	Dulong in gabi leaves Pork barbecue Rice Pandan gelatin 	Lapu Lapu fillet with sweet corn sauce Beef steak Chinese-style Rice Fruit salad with buko strips

ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

Chinese Paella

½ kg deboned chicken thighs and cut into 4 portions

Marinade:

2 tbsp soy sauce

1 tbsp pounded garlic

¼ tsp coarsely ground black pepper

2 tbsp white sugar

1 tsp grated ginger oil for frying

¼ c corn oil

1 tbsp well-pounded garlic

1 ¼ c sliced red onions

3 pcs Chinese sausage, sliced diagonally

6 pcs dried Shiitake mushrooms, soaked until soft, washed and cut into thin strips

3 c raw rice, washed (Dinorado variety)

¼ c plus 2 tbsp soy sauce

1 tbsp plus 1 tsp sesame oil

¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper

4 to 4 ½ c water or chicken stock

Topping:

Spring onions, chopped finely

Cooked scrambled eggs, sliced into thin strips

Fried peanuts with the skin on

Marinade the chicken for at least 30 minutes. Fry until golden but not necessarily done. Set aside.

In a big wok, heat up ¼ c corn oil. Add the garlic and the onions, and sauté until the onions are wilted. Then add the sliced Chinese sausage and the mushrooms. Mix well. Sauté for a few minutes until the fat from the chorizo oozes out. Add the fried chicken. Pour in the rice and mix well. Pour in the soy sauce, the sesame oil and the pepper. Then, pour in 1 c of chicken stock. Keep on stirring until the rice has absorbed the liquid. Pour in 3 c more of the stock and allow to boil. Transfer to a rice cooker and cook until done. Add more water if necessary.

Transfer the rice to a serving platter. Garnish with chopped spring onions, scrambled eggs and fried peanuts.

Chicken and Vegetable Spaghetti Pie

1 tbsp softened butter to grease pie plate

Crust :

200 g raw spaghetti noodles cooked according to package directions and drained

2 tbsp melted butter

2 whole eggs, graded extra large

½ c grated cheddar cheese

Filling:

2 tbsp olive oil

1 c broccoli flowers

1 c carrots, peeled and sliced into thin strips

1 c red or green bell pepper, halved, seeded and sliced into thin strips

½ c sliced canned button mushrooms

½ c sliced onions

237 g can tomato sauce

¼ c grated Quickmelt cheese

1 tsp fine salt

½ tsp coarsely ground black pepper

1 ½ tsp bottled Italian seasoning

2 c boiled and cubed chicken

Topping:

1 c grated Quickmelt cheese

1 tbsp chopped parsley

Preheat the oven to 350 °F.

Grease the bottom and sides of a pie plate with softened butter. Set aside.

Cook the spaghetti noodles according to package directions. Drain well and rinse in running water to stop the cooking. Set aside. In a mixing bowl combine the remaining ingredients for the crust. Beat with a wire whip to blend. Add the noodles and mix well. Transfer the mixture to the prepared pie plate. Using the back of a spoon, push the noodles around to line the bottom and the sides of the pie plate. Set aside.

To prepare the filling, heat the oil in a frying pan. Add the broccoli, the carrots, the bell pepper strips, the sliced mushrooms and the onions. Sauté until the onions become wilted. Pour in the spaghetti sauce, the cheese, the salt, the pepper and the Italian seasoning. Allow to boil, then turn off the heat. Stir in the cubed chicken and mix gently to blend.

Pour this mixture in the pie plate lined with noodles, keeping most of the sauce in the center of the plate. Only about a ½-inch wide of noodles from the edge must remain visible. Top with grated cheese and bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until the cheese begin to brown. Top with chopped parsley to garnish.

Sticky Rice with Mangoes

½ kg sticky rice (*malagkit na bilog*)

½ c white sugar

water to cook rice

Sauce:

158 g can cream

3-4 tbsp condensed milk

Garnishing:

4 ripe mangoes, sliced

Muscovado sugar

Toasted sesame seeds

Toasted dessicated coconut

Wash the rice until the water runs clear. Measure the rice and transfer to a rice cooker. Pour in an equal amount of water. Stir in sugar. Cook until done.

Form the rice into small mounds using a rice former or a damp teacup. Arrange them in a large serving platter. Garnish with mangoes on the side. Top the rice with the sauce. Garnish with a generous sprinkling of muscovado sugar, toasted sesame seeds and toasted coconut. Chill.

Dorothy MJ Ferreria offers cooking classes at Dorothy's Cooking School at 48 Third Street, New Manila, Quezon City. Call 721-7735.

The joys of tuna

THIS LENTEN Season is a good time to rediscover the joy of eating fish. It's not only healthier; it's also good for the soul. Cabalen, the premiere buffet restaurant, has a Tuna Festival for this season.

Prime dishes are Quilain Tuna with Cucumber and Radish, Tinolang Tuna with lemongrass, Bistig Tuna Belly, Kare-kareng Tuna, Tuna Belly in Sweet Sauce, Grilled Panga ng Tuna, Sisig Tuna, and Crispy Tuna Tail.

Cabalen Restaurant's 10 branches at West Avenue, Quezon City; Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City; SM Megamall Mandaluyong; SM City Manila; SM City North Edsa, Quezon City; Glorietta 3, Ayala Center; Robinsons Place Ermita Manila, Robinsons Starmills Pampanga; Brick Road Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall, and the newly owned branch at Harrison Plaza Village Square Manila. Visit their website at www. cabalen.com.ph. Call 421-9220 or 913-5522 for catering.

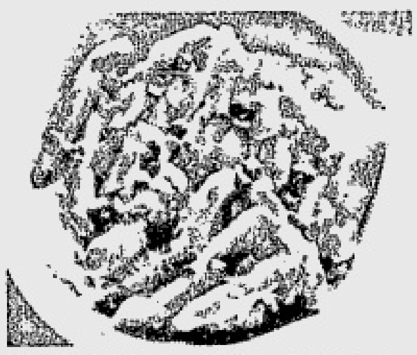
TINOLANG
Tuna with lemongrass

Great things are hatching this Easter

CALIFORNIA Pizza Kitchen invites all kids aged 10 and below to join the annual CPK Easter activities on April 20. Visit CPK Glorietta 3 and Shangri-La Plaza Mall for the Easter egg hunt, or CPK Alabang Town Center and Tomas Morato for Easter egg painting.

EDSA Shangri-La's Easter 2+1 Special, ongoing until April 30, offers packages inclusive of buffet breakfast for two on three days and a 15 percent discount on tickets to the Circus! Circus! Easter Sunday Fair at Isla Ballroom. Call 636-9083 to 87.

MARIO'S Restaurant presents a selection of dishes for the whole family this Easter. A face-painting booth will also be set up. Call Ortigas at 634-3418 and 20; QC, 3720360/4153887.



CHICKEN Teriyaki at Pacific Wharf restaurant

CELEBRATE Easter with the whole family at Miro Ortigas center 11 a.m.-2 p.m. The Sunday buffet includes Seafood Gratin, Rolled Chicken Katsu, and Tanigue Meuniere. Miro is located at the 2/F of Millennium Place Bldg., Meralco Avenue, Ortigas Center. Call 687-0880/3439.

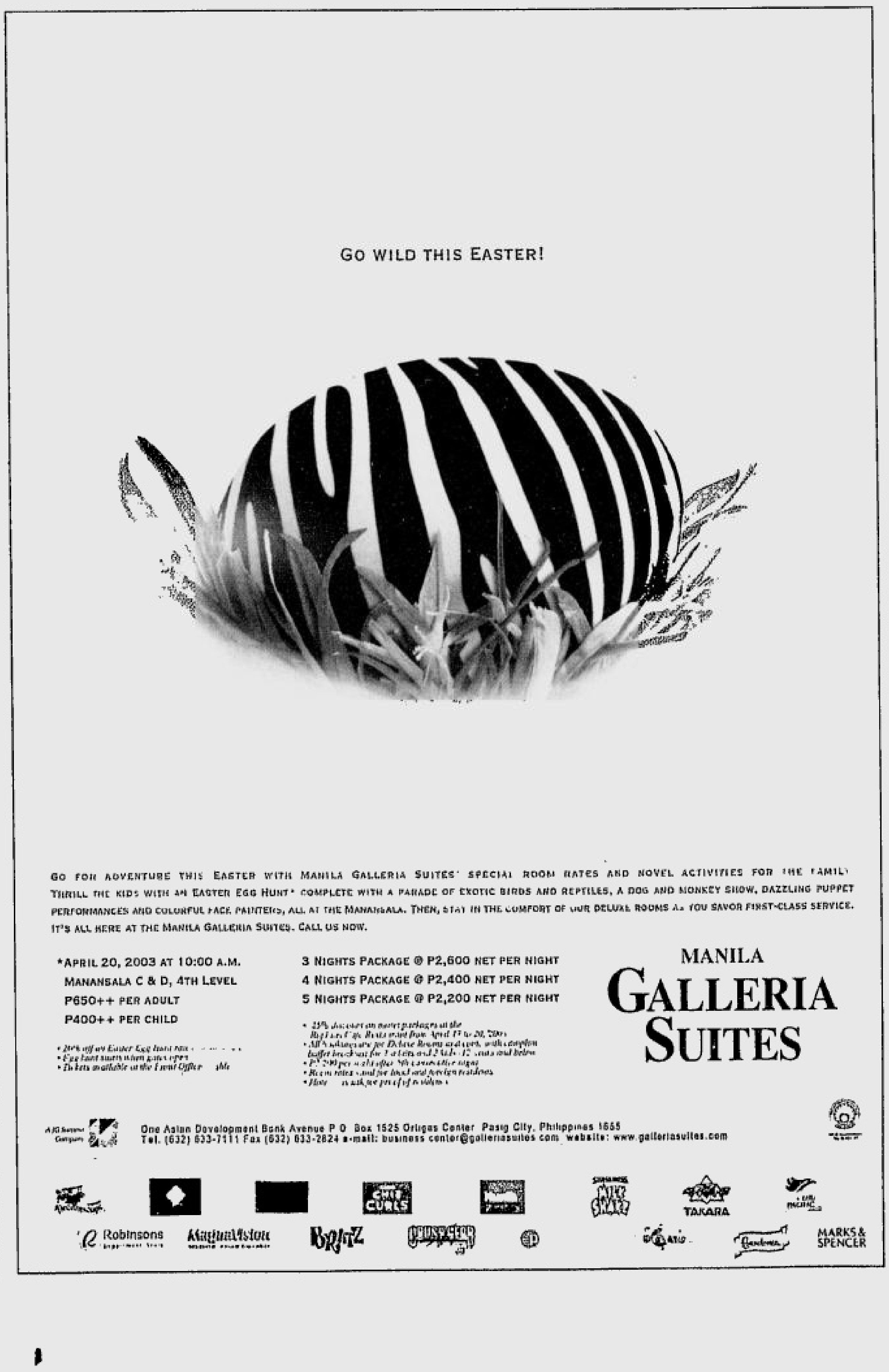
DISCOVERY Suites offers an Easter celebration for the young and the old alike.
There'll be an Easter Sunday Mass at 10 a.m. at the Discovery Center Atrium Lobby, followed by a lunch buffet at Café Berrio at 12 nn. Call 635-2222 local 3805/3806.

THE FISHING Village Restaurant treats children to a magic show, Easter egg hunt, fun games and prizes galore. Buffet includes gourmet's favorites such as roasted Peking duck, red crabs and steamed scallops. Located at 247 Padre Faura St. corner Roxas Boulevard in Ermita, Manila. Call 536-1916/8838.

THE RICHMONDE Hotel offers a special treat with an Easter Sunday lunch buffet. Call 638-7777.

ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT a la carte lunch menu at Makati Shangri-La's Inagiku features its most popular dishes on Black Saturday, April 19. On Easter Sunday, Inagiku will feature an Easter Sunday Lunch Buffet. Call 840-0884 or 8138888 locals 7588 or 7599.

KIDS get free desserts from Super Bowl of China and Big Buddha. Super Bowl of China has branches at Megastrip, SM Megamall; Jupiter St., Bel-Air, Makati City; and Glorietta 4. Big Buddha Restaurant is located at Greenbelt 3, Makati City.



GO WILD THIS EASTER!

GO FOR ADVENTURE THIS EASTER WITH MANILA GALLERIA SUITES' SPECIAL ROOM RATES AND NOVEL ACTIVITIES FOR THE FAMILY. THRILL THE KIDS WITH AN EASTER EGG HUNT* COMPLETE WITH A PARADE OF EXOTIC BIRDS AND REPTILES, A DOG AND MONKEY SHOW, DAZZLING PUPPET PERFORMANCES AND COLORFUL FACE PAINTERS, ALL AT THE MANANSALA. THEN, STAY IN THE COMFORT OF OUR DELUXE ROOMS AS YOU SAVOR FIRST-CLASS SERVICE. IT'S ALL HERE AT THE MANILA GALLERIA SUITES. CALL US NOW.

*APRIL 20, 2003 AT 10:00 A.M.
MANANSALA C & D, 4TH LEVEL
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Robinsons TAKARA MARKS & SPENCER

I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'RE ALL VEGGIES. (from left) Fried Rice with Ham, Banana Almond, Barbecues and Mushroom Mua

Green menu

All-veggie dishes must be as interesting and well-conceived as other entrées

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

GONE are the days when a vegetarian plate meant soggy vegetables and white rice offered almost as an afterthought at the bottom of a menu. Nowadays, all-vegetable dishes hold their own alongside meat-based entrées.

Interest in meatless meals has been helped along by the growing acceptance of Asian cuisine, with their boldly flavored dishes and strong vegetable base. The increasing demand for fresher, healthier food is also having an impact, as well as the increasing popularity of organically grown ingredients.

TAIWAN Tofu

KAIWEI Chay

"More and more restaurants are offering the vegetarian option and it's (becoming as commonplace as) having salad on the menu," said Lin Yueh Chin, chef of Kong Tiak Vegetarian Restaurant, through interpreter Lani Go.

Located at 27 Macopa St. corner Banawe St., Quezon City, Kong Tiak Vegetarian Restaurant (tels. 732-1917, 731-6843, 0917-6087362) weaves together a menu with an alluring balance, ranging from entrées such as Chicken Curry, Barbecue and Fried Rice with (veggie) Ham to offerings like Bamboo Fungus Soup, Mushroom Mua and Taiwan Tofu.

Established in 2001, the 144-seater Kong Tiak is owned by Lee Mei Feng, a minister of the Great Tao temple at the sixth level of the same building where the restaurant is located.

"Lee Mei Feng put up the vegetarian restaurant for she believes that eating veggies, aside from being good for one's health, can help redeem a person's spirit and help one escape bad karma," said Lin, who volunteered her services as chef of Kong Tiak "because I have been blessed by the Great Tao."

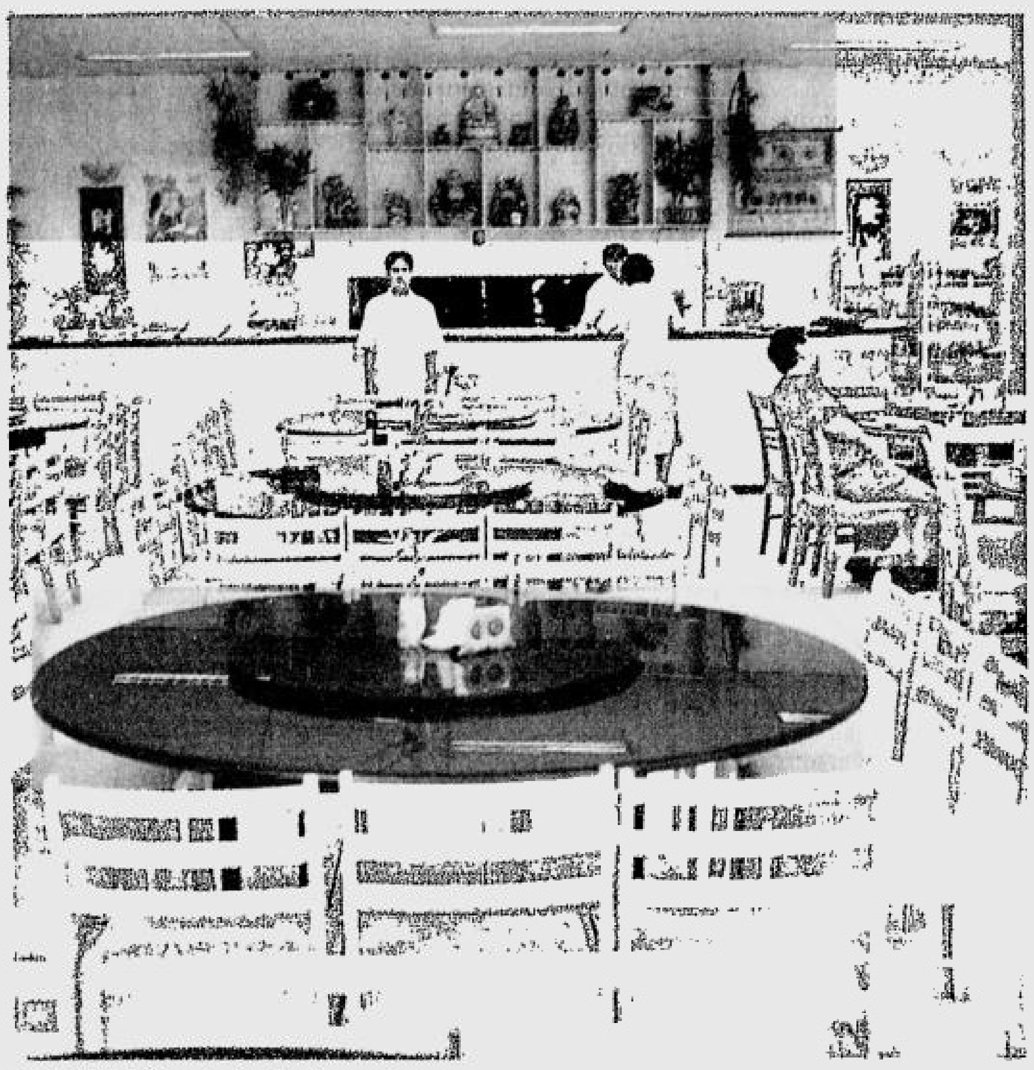
According to Lin, some customers look for meatless options to make sure they nosh some healthy food or to make up for past nutritional transgressions. Others see vegetarian dishes as increasing their choices of meals eaten away from home. Entrepreneurs have capitalized on the trend by opening restaurants that cater to such a crowd without alienating carnivores.

Outlet for creativity

While some chefs include one or two options on the menu just to be able to provide diners with the meatless entrée they want, a growing number view the demand as an opportunity to further display their creativity and make the most of natural ingredients.

Lin uses high-quality ingredients like bamboo fungus, veggie ham, veggie eel, Taiwan tofu, "meatballs, chicken" and veggie kidney imported from Taiwan. She is judicious, but never stingy, in using corn oil.

With the ingredients, she tries to achieve contrasting bold and sublime flavors in Kong Tiak's veggie specials, veggie meat, noodles, soups, snacks, side dishes and desserts.



KONG Tiak Vegetarian Restaurant

ICE Cream with Pearls

Kong Tiak accepts orders for take-out and catering. Its specialties include Pineapple Veggie Meat, Sweet and Sour Gabi, Lo Han Chai, Lotus Chicken Soup, Three Lucky Chops, Assorted Vegetarian Cold Cuts, Vegetarian Fish, Barbecue, Vegetarian Eel, 8 Treasure Patpo Rice and Slice Veggie Cod Fish.

"A vegetarian option must be as interesting and well-conceived as other entrées. You need to start with flavor first and know how to bring out the best in your ingredients," Lin said.

Kong Tiak is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, 7 a.m.-10 p.m. daily. It will be open even on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Black Saturday.

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

Theme dinners, tuna recipes and Pinoy treats

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

BY the time you read this, some of you would be off to visit churches, would have said a prayer or two and recited the Stations of the Cross. The rest, however, have by now consumed a bottle too many, partied too much, feasted on all things edible and, in a state of terrible hangover, are contemplating the fancy thought of making a Lenten sacrifice.

Wherever you are at this particular time, whichever way it is that you've decided to spend this wonderful break from the maddening routine of life in the rat race, let's not forget to thank God for all he has blessed us with—the gifts of good food, good health and people we love to share these with.

Best banana bread

Banana! Banana! I never thought that there are millions out there who crave for Banana Cake, Banana Bread, and are in search of the best recipe and the best place to buy it.

After receiving 17 letters on this topic, I felt the need to address it. I had published a recipe a few weeks ago. But for those who'd rather buy than bake, one of the nicest and cheapest is the one made by Panaderong Kristiano. You can call or text Brother Cesar Talukod at 0917-7959565 for your orders. Their cheese roll and pan de coco are yummy, yummy, yummy, too.

I believe in your style and suggestions. I am interested in themed dinner parties and I would like to ask you for a specialty shop where I can get nice table linens and dinner sets that can be conversational pieces for my guest. I feel so happy when my guest appreciates these things.

AILEEN LOPEZ

Being in the business and having friends who own lifestyle stores, I am extremely lucky to get to view the new items before they hit the shelves. And unlucky, because I go through clinical depression once they bill me!

Themed parties are wonderful to execute. Oh boy, how I love them! Lately, one of my "bestest" friends, Nelia Silverio Dee, got back from an Asian buying spree for her store called Simple Pleasures in Greenbelt 3. I got myself a nice antique-looking dinner set that works real well with my Asian dinners. I also got a set of exquisite hand embroidered table linens, placemats, tray mats and napkins. The green hand-blown Mexican glasses are worth checking out as well.

You can go and buy the rest of her things, lest I beat you to it. Have pity on me, I still feel like buying more of what I no longer need!

I tried making *pulburon* here in the US because of the many pouches of non-fat milk given to me by my elderly friends. But to my surprise, it came out powdery and not firm even if refrigerated for a long period of time. How do you make *pulburon* like the ones sold in Goldilocks?

GITTE of Norwalk

Kitchen Rescue has arrived indeed! A number of e-mail I got this week have been from the United States, Singapore, Europe and Australia!

Two things: one, I've never tried using non-fat milk and, two, *pulburon* should hold its shape even without refrigeration.

So, Gitte, from me to you: my Lola's *pulburon* recipe. Lola used Nido or Klim; I use Bear Brand. Just choose your favorite powdered milk. Get back to me and let me know how it turned out!

SAPIN-SAPIN

Pulburon

3 ½ c cake flour
2 ½ c powdered milk
1 ½ c caster sugar
1 c butter, melted

Toast flour until light brown in color, stirring constantly. In a bowl, combine the toasted flour, powdered milk, sugar and melted butter. Mix well. Using a *pulburon* mold, shape the mixture, pressing firmly before unmolding. Wrap individually in Japanese paper.

I've been waiting for your kind of column and at last, after all these years, you came. You are heaven-sent especially to us who love to cook. I have been looking for recipes for carbonara with tuna and other recipes that include tuna. I'm on a diet that's why I want to indulge on tuna. Carbonara is also my mom's new favorite but we don't know how to prepare it so we just buy, but this Mother's Day I want to cook carbonara for her.

MARIVIC

Yes, God answers prayers, so here's your tuna carbonara recipe. If you're counting calories though, carbonara should not be on top of your diet food chain. Just the same, hope Mom enjoys it and please, give her a tight hug for me!

Spaghetti Carbonara

1 c of smoked bacon or regular bacon chopped (in your case, Marivic, use tuna chunks in water, drained and flaked)
2 tbsp minced garlic
2 tbsp butter
½ c whipping cream
½ c grated Parmesan cheese
4 large egg yolks
freshly cracked pepper and salt to taste
12 ounces spaghetti, cooked al dente
additional grated Parmesan cheese

Combine garlic, bacon or tuna and butter in a skillet. Sauté until bacon has browned. Set aside. (If using tuna, sauté lightly in butter.)

Whisk cream, ½ c grated cheese and egg yolks in medium bowl to blend; add bacon and bacon drippings or tuna and tuna drippings from the skillet.

Add cream mixture to pasta. Toss over low heat (do not boil) about a minute. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve with additional cheese.

Can you please provide me a recipe for *sapin-sapin*. The available ingredients in Australia are rice powder and glutinous rice. Of course we also have coconut cream in form of powder or in can. I'll appreciate for your reply.

DONNA

May I ask why you would like to make *sapin-sapin*? The best solution I have for you is this—go and buy! Just kidding!

Here's a *sapin-sapin* recipe that I've sourced but haven't tried. Do kitchen test it for me. If it doesn't turn out well, then at least you'll have something that looks like *sapin-sapin*. I will continue to research on the topic and get back to you as soon as I have the answers.

Sapin-Sapin

3 c *galapong* (ground rice)
1 ½ c sugar
1 ½ c coconut milk (combination of ½ c *kakang gata* 1st extraction no water, and 1 cup 2nd extraction)
½ c *ube*, boiled and mashed well
1 tsp vanilla
1 tsp butter
1 pack of yellow coloring
1 pack of violet coloring
1 pack of red coloring

Mix 1 c *galapong* with ½ c coconut milk, *ube* and ½ tsp of vanilla. I suggest using your hands for this. Make sure that its lump-free. Combine the rest of the *galapong*, coconut milk, sugar and vanilla. Mix until well blended and lump free.

Divide the mixture in to 3 parts. Color one part yellow, one part red and leave the other uncolored (white).

Bring your steamer to a boil, line an 8 inch *bilao*, line with coconut leaves or wax paper, grease with butter, and pour the *ube* mixture first and steam for 15 minute or until firm. Then pour the succeeding layers steaming 15-20 minutes per layer.

I just discovered your column in PDI which I read daily through the Net. I've been based in Singapore for three years now and it's only through the Net that I get updated on what's happening back home. Now let me go to my question—what is red wine dreg? There is a recipe that I want to try which has it as one of the ingredients. Someone told me that "dreg" means residue which means that red wine dreg is just the remnants of red wine you find at the bottom of the bottle. Do you agree?

CHRIS FAUSTO
Singapore

This is interesting! Could you please send me a copy of the recipe you want to try out that has dregs as an ingredient? See, dregs by definition is any sediment that has settled at the bottom of any liquid, not necessarily wine. Well, since the recipe requires red wine dregs, then I must agree that it is the remnants at the bottom of a red wine bottle.

Though I think Verjus is a great substitute and a better ingredient to use. Verjus is fresh juice of unripe wine grapes. It saves you from having to consume bottles and bottles to make a cup of dregs. I look forward to receiving the recipe. Keep safe and SARS-free!

Happy Easter! *Salut!*

NO ISSUE:

APRIL 18 – 19, 2003